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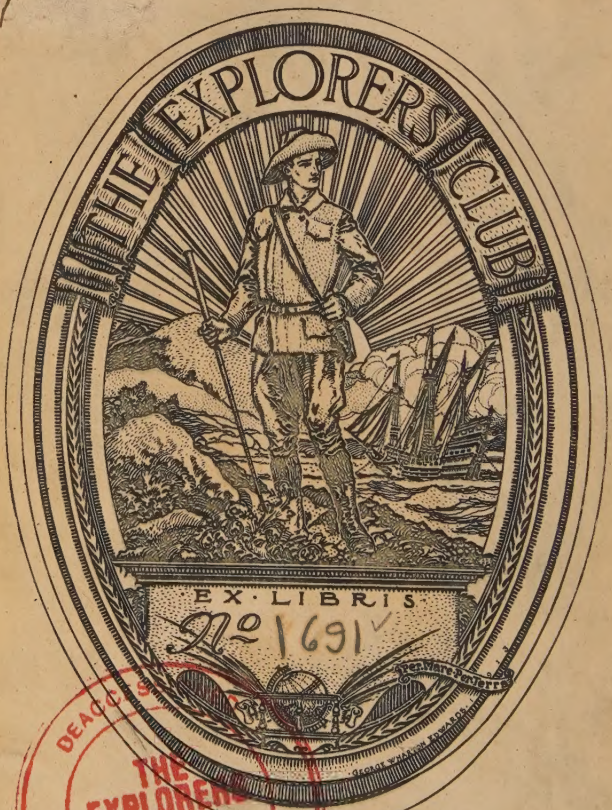

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THE GREAT COMPANY

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PRINCE RUPERT

From the picture at the Hudson Bay Company's House

THE GREAT COMPANY

(1667–1871)

BEING A

HISTORY OF THE HONOURABLE COMPANY OF MERCHANTS-ADVENTURERS TRADING INTO HUDSON'S BAY

COMPILED FROM THE COMPANY'S ARCHIVES; FROM DIPLOMATIC DOCUMENTS AND STATE PAPERS OF FRANCE AND ENGLAND; FROM THE NARRATIVES OF FACTORS AND TRADERS; AND FROM MANY ACCOUNTS AND MEMOIRS

BY

BECKLES WILLSON

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

LORD STRATHCONA AND MOUNT ROYAL

GOVERNOR OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

WITH NUMEROUS PORTRAITS AND A MAP OF THE TERRITORY

VOL. I

LONDON

SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE

1900

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
At the Ballantyne Press

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TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR WILFRID LAURIER, G.C.M.G.

PREMIER OF CANADA

PREFACE

As a sovereign power in the Western Hemisphere, the remarkable body whose history I have sought to present, witnessed French and Spanish, Russian, Dutch, and Portuguese dominion in turn flourish there, decline and disappear. It saw from afar new colonies planted by European States; it saw the beginning and the end of the bloody quarrels which transformed these colonies themselves into states. It saw numerous wars, great and small, hotly waged and meanly wane; and (contributing less than any to this end) the gradual extermination of the aboriginal masters of the Northern Continent. In the long era of its sovereignty, the remote forest fastnesses of the moose and beaver were transformed by loyal British subjects into opulent provinces. But that series of changes, so often picturesque and always significant, which has marked the history of the western world, left, seemingly, one institution untouched.

Surviving all *régimes* and nearly all conditions, for a period of two full centuries the "Great Company" (thus it was dubbed by the aborigines) existed unshorn

of any of its greatness, the one original pillar remaining in that New World mansion, which is at once the refuge of errant peoples and the theatre of discoveries, vicissitudes, and experiments. Upon the Company was conferred the right of establishing castles and fortifications, garrisons and colonies, plantations, towns, and villages, in any parts or places within the limits of its own territory; and to each of its outposts, forts, and stations it had the right of sending ships of war, men or ammunition, and of appointing governors, commanders, and officers to control them and the surrounding districts.

As a pioneering factor in a rude wilderness, the Hudson's Bay Company naturally occupied a very different position from such a body as the East India Company; it is worth remembering besides that it began as a territorial sovereign of the very first magnitude. Differing as widely in root as in branch from the French associations in Canada for the traffic in furs, it did not go forth amongst the natives with the Bible in its hand. Evangelisation was not even one of its excuses. Yet it was truly a friend to the Red man; and had its policy been the only one affecting that unhappy being in daily life, commerce, and morals, the result might have been vastly different, not only for himself but equally for the fur-trade. Nevertheless, if the Company had never suffered from competition, or had never even known a rival, the

westward march of an inexorable civilisation must have brought its sway to a curtailment, if not to a close.

It is easy to perceive that the day is not far distant when that map showing the area of the Company's rule will be dotted with villages, towns, and cities; the forests of Rupert's Land uprooted; its plains tilled by the husbandman, flocks and herds roaming its valleys, miners in summer and winter vexing its pine-clad hills. Yet what few spots there are in this vast region which can cease to bear testimony for generations to come to the labours and heroisms of the servants of the Great Company? Here—there—wherever indeed we choose to cast our glance, traces confront us of the indomitable fur-hunter who, often frozen and hungry, always in remoteness and solitude, lived here his life, and lent his name to lake, mountain, and river, to settlement, creek, or hill.

With regard to the official motto of the Company, concerning which there have arisen some amusing misconceptions, I should like to hazard a word. Many who have not believed "Pro pelle cutem" a quotation from a classical Latin author, have fancied that it was adopted latterly in allusion to Sir J. H. Pelly, Bart., who was Governor of the Company for thirty years, from 1822 to 1852. The meaning of the motto is not, as commonly rendered, "A skin for a skin," but "We seek (or want) the skin for the sake of the fur," some verb being understood to govern the accusative case *cutem*.

While the phrase is not a quotation, its occurrence in a transposed form in the celebrated Tenth Satire of Juvenal is curious: "Deformem pro cute pellem . . . aspice," which may be rendered: "Instead of a skin behold a tangled hide!"

There is likewise a singular phrase in the Vulgate (Job ii. 4): "Pellem pro pelle, et cuncta quae habet homo, dabit pro anima sua," which we thus translate: "(And Satan answered the Lord and said) Skin for skin, yea all that a man hath will he give for his life."

I wish to record my gratitude to many for assistance and courtesies rendered to me during the writing of a narrative which has necessitated no little time and application. Amongst those besides the venerable Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal to whom I am especially indebted I ought to mention Mr. William Ware, the courteous secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company; Mr. Martin Griffin, the Parliamentary Librarian; Mr. Sylvain, the Assistant Librarian, both of Ottawa; Mr. Douglas Brymner, the Dominion Archivist at Ottawa; Mr. Lionel Portman, and to M. Trarieux of Paris. I owe thanks to the Countess of Selkirk for a photograph of the bust of Lord Selkirk; and also to Mr. Matthew Semple of Philadelphia for a miniature of his ancestor, Governor Semple.

Of pretensions to being what is called exhaustive in these two volumes I make none; indeed there is

material left for an entertaining series. But there are, I am happy to learn, others labouring in the field whose pens, better practised in historical writing, may be left henceforth to traverse, more minutely and in far more picturesque fashion than my own, what I have found, for a space, a congenial and an attractive theme.

Devonshire Club, London,
December 1899.

CONTENTS

PAGES

PREFACE vii

GOVERNORS OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY xxi

DEPUTY-GOVERNORS OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY . . xxiii

INTRODUCTION xxv

CHAPTER I

1660–1667

EFFECT OF THE RESTORATION ON TRADE — ADVENTURERS AT WHITEHALL—THE EAST INDIA COMPANY MONOPOLY—ENGLISH INTEREST IN NORTH AMERICA—PRINCE RUPERT'S CLAIMS—THE FUR TRADE OF CANADA—AIM OF THE WORK 1–8

CHAPTER II

1659–1666

GROSEILLIERS AND RADISSON—THEIR PEREGRINATIONS IN THE NORTH-WEST—THEY RETURN TO QUEBEC AND LAY THEIR SCHEME BEFORE THE GOVERNOR—REPULSED BY HIM THEY PROCEED TO NEW ENGLAND—AND THENCE SAIL FOR FRANCE, WHERE THEY ENDEAVOUR TO INTEREST M. COLBERT 9–24

CHAPTER III

1640–1667

PAGES

PRINCE RUPERT — HIS CHARACTER — SERVES THROUGH THE CIVIL WAR — HIS NAVAL EXPEDITION IN THE WEST INDIES — RESIDENCE IN FRANCE—AND ULTIMATELY IN LONDON—HE RECEIVES GROSEILLIERS AND INTRODUCES HIM TO THE KING 25–36

CHAPTER IV

1668–1670

THE PRINCE VISITS THE "NONSUCH"—ARRIVAL IN THE BAY —PREVIOUS VOYAGES OF EXPLORATION—A FORT COMMENCED AT RUPERT'S RIVER — GILLAM'S RETURN— DEALING WITH THE NODWAYES—SATISFACTION OF THE COMPANY—A ROYAL CHARTER GRANTED 37–48

CHAPTER V

1668–1670

DANGER APPREHENDED TO FRENCH DOMINION — INTENDANT TALON—FUR-TRADE EXTENDED WESTWARD—NEWS OF THE ENGLISH EXPEDITION REACHES QUEBEC—SOVEREIGN RIGHTS IN QUESTION—ENGLISH PRIORITY ESTABLISHED 49–58

CHAPTER VI

1671

FIRST PUBLIC SALE AT GARRAWAY'S—CONTEMPORARY PRICES OF FUR—THE POET DRYDEN—MEETINGS OF THE COMPANY—CURIOSITY OF THE TOWN —ABORIGINES ON VIEW 59–70

CHAPTER VII

1671–1673

PAGES

Mission of the Père Albanel—Apprehension at Fort Charles — Bailey's distrust of Radisson — Expedition to Moose River—Groseilliers and the savages —The Bushrangers leave the Company's service—Arrival of Governor Lyddal 71–84

CHAPTER VIII

1673–1682

Progress of the Company—Confusion as to the names and number of the tribes—Radisson goes to Paris —His efforts to obtain support there, and from Prince Rupert, in England, fail—Arrival of M. de la Chesnaye—With his help Radisson secures support—And sails for Quebec—Thence proceeds with two ships to attack the English ports in Hudson's Bay—His encounters with Gillam's expedition from London, and his son's from New England 85–105

CHAPTER IX

1682–1683

Death of Prince Rupert—The Company's difficulty in procuring proper servants—Radisson at Port Nelson—The two Gillams—Their meeting—Capture of the New England party—The first Scotchman in the Bay—Governor Bridgar carried off prisoner—Indian Visitors to the Fort—Disasters to the ships —The French burn the Island Fort—Radisson's harangue to the Indians—Return to France . 106–132

CHAPTER X

1683–1685

PAGES

HAYS WRITES TO LORD PRESTON—GODEY SENT TO RADISSON'S LODGINGS—LA BARRE'S STRENUOUS EFFORTS—RADISSON RETURNS TO THE ENGLISH—HE LEAVES FOR THE BAY—MEETS HIS NEPHEW CHOUART—FORT BOURBON SURRENDERED TO THE COMPANY—RADISSON'S DRAMATIC RETURN TO LONDON 133–151

CHAPTER XI

1685–1686

FEIGNED ANGER OF LEWIS—HE WRITES TO LA BARRE—IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO INDIAN TREATIES—DULUTH'S ZEAL—GAUTHIER DE COMPORTIER—DENONVILLE MADE GOVERNOR—CAPTURE OF THE "MERCHANT OF PERPETUANA"—EXPEDITION OF TROYES AGAINST THE COMPANY'S POSTS IN THE BAY—MOOSE FORT SURRENDERED . 152–164

CHAPTER XII

1686–1689

THE FRENCH ATTACK UPON FORT RUPERT—GOVERNOR SARGEANT APPRISED—INTREPIDITY OF NIXON—CAPTURE OF FORT ALBANY—DISASTER TO THE "CHURCHILL"—THE COMPANY HEARS THE ILL NEWS—NEGOTIATIONS FOR COLONIAL NEUTRALITY—DESTRUCTION OF NEW SEVERN FORT—LOSS OF THE "HAMPSHIRE"—THE REVOLUTION 165–181

CHAPTER XIII

1689–1696

PAGES

COMPANY'S CLAIMS MENTIONED IN DECLARATION OF WAR —PARLIAMENT GRANTS COMPANY'S APPLICATION FOR CONFIRMATION OF ITS CHARTER—IMPLACABILITY OF THE FELT-MAKERS — FORT ALBANY NOT A SUCCESS IN THE HANDS OF THE FRENCH—DENONVILLE URGES AN ATTACK UPON PORT NELSON—LEWIS DESPATCHES TAST WITH A FLEET TO CANADA — IBERVILLE'S JEALOUSY PREVENTS ITS SAILING TO THE BAY—GOVERNOR PHIPPS BURNS FORT NELSON—FURTHER AGITATION ON THE PART OF THE FRENCH TO POSSESS THE WEST MAIN — COMPANY MAKES ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO REGAIN FORT ALBANY —FORT NELSON SURRENDERED TO IBERVILLE—ITS RE-CONQUEST BY THE COMPANY 182–197

CHAPTER XIV

1696–1697

IMPRISONED FRENCH FUR-TRADERS REACH PARIS—A FLEET UNDER IBERVILLE DESPATCHED BY LEWIS TO THE BAY —COMPANY'S FOUR SHIPS PRECEDE THEM THROUGH THE STRAITS — BEGINNING OF A FIERCE BATTLE — THE "HAMPSHIRE" SINKS—ESCAPE OF THE "DERING" AND CAPTURE OF THE "HUDSON'S BAY"—DREADFUL STORM IN THE BAY—LOSSES OF THE VICTORS—LANDING OF IBERVILLE—OPERATIONS AGAINST FORT NELSON—BAILEY YIELDS—EVACUATION BY THE ENGLISH . . . 198–210

CHAPTER XV

1698–1713

PETITION PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT HOSTILE TO COMPANY—SEVENTEENTH CENTURY CONDITIONS OF TRADE— "COUREURS DES BOIS"—PRICE OF PELTRIES—STANDARD OF TRADE PRESCRIBED — COMPANY'S CONSERVATISM—

PAGES

Letters to Factors — Character of the early Governors — Henry Kelsey — York Factory under the French—Massacre of Jérémie's men—Starvation amongst the Indians 211–233

CHAPTER XVI

1697–1712

Company seriously damaged by loss of Port Nelson—Send an account of their claims to Lords of Trade—Definite boundary propositions of trade—Lewis anxious to create boundaries—Company look to outbreak of war—War of Spanish Succession breaks out—Period of adversity for the Company—Employment of Orkneymen — Attack on Fort Albany—Desperate condition of the French at York Fort—Petition to Anne 234–248

CHAPTER XVII

1712–1720

Queen Anne espouses the cause of the Company—Prior's view of its wants—Treaty of Utrecht—Joy of the Adventurers — Petition for Act of Cession—Not pressed by the British Government—Governor Knight authorised to take possession of Port Nelson — "Smug ancient gentlemen" — Commissioners to ascertain rights—Their meeting in Paris—Matters move slowly—Bladen and Pulteney return to England 249–261

CHAPTER XVIII

1719–1727

The South Sea Bubble—Nation catches the fever of speculation—Strong temptation for the Company—Pricking of the Bubble—Narrow escape of the Adventurers—Knight and his Expedition—Anxiety

PAGES

AS TO THEIR FATE — CERTAINTY OF THEIR LOSS— BURNETT'S SCHEME TO CRIPPLE THE FRENCH—IT FORCES THEM WESTWARD INTO RUPERT'S LAND . . . 262-273

CHAPTER XIX

1687–1712

HUDSON'S BAY TRIBES PEACEFUL—EFFECT OF THE TRADERS' PRESENCE—DEPLETION OF POPULATION—THE CREES AND ASSINIBOINES — THEIR HABITS AND CUSTOMS — THEIR NUMBERS — NO SUBORDINATION AMONGST THEM — SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS—EFFECT OF INTEMPERANCE UPON THE INDIAN 274–289

CHAPTER XX

1685–1742

ERRANT TRIBES OF THE BAY—THE GOOSE HUNT—ASSEMBLAGE AT LAKE WINNIPEG—DIFFICULTIES OF THE VOYAGE—ARRIVAL AT THE FORT—CEREMONY FOLLOWED BY DEBAUCH—GIFTS TO THE CHIEF—HE MAKES A SPEECH TO THE GOVERNOR—CEREMONY OF THE PIPE—TRADING BEGUN 290–300

CHAPTER XXI

1731–1742

SYSTEM OF LICENSES READOPTED BY THE FRENCH—VERANDRYE SETS OUT FOR THE PACIFIC—HIS SON SLAIN—DISAPPOINTMENTS—HE REACHES THE ROCKIES—DEATH OF VERANDRYE—FORTS IN RUPERT'S LAND—PETER THE GREAT AND THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY—EXPEDITIONS OF BERING—A NORTH-WEST PASSAGE—OPPOSITION OF THE COMPANY TO ITS DISCOVERY—DOBBS AND MIDDLETON — LUDICROUS DISTRUST OF THE EXPLORER — AN ANONYMOUS LETTER 301–322

CHAPTER XXII

1744–1748

PAGES

War again with France—Company takes measures to defend its Forts and Property—"Keep your guns loaded"—Prince "Charlie"—His Stock in the Company confiscated—Further Instructions to the Chief Factors—Another Expedition to search for a North-West Passage—Parliament offers Twenty Thousand Pounds Reward—Cavalier Treatment from Governor Norton—Expedition returns—Dobbs' enmity—Privy Council refuse to grant his Petition—Press-gang outrages—Voyage of the "Sea-horse" 323–339

GOVERNORS OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

His Highness Prince Rupert	1670–1683
H.R.H. James, Duke of York (afterwards King James II.)	1683–1685
John, Lord Churchill (afterwards Duke of Marlborough)	1685–1691
Sir Stephen Evance, Kt.	1691–1696
The Rt. Hon. Sir William Trumbull	1696–1700
Sir Stephen Evance, Kt.	1700–1712
Sir Bibye Lake, Bart.	1712–1743
Benjamin Pitt	1743–1746
Thomas Knapp	1746–1750
Sir Atwell Lake, Bart.	1750–1760
Sir William Baker, Kt.	1760–1770
Bibye Lake	1770–1782
Samuel Wegg	1782–1799
Sir James Winter Lake, Bart.	1799–1807
William Mainwaring	1807–1812
Joseph Berens, Junior	1812–1822
Sir John Henry Pelly, Bart.	1822–1852
Andrew Colville	1852–1856
John Shepherd	1856–1858
Henry Hulse Berens	1858–1863
Rt. Hon. Sir Edmund Walker Head, Bart., K.C.B.	1863–1868
Rt. Hon. The Earl of Kimberley	1868–1869
Rt. Hon. Sir Stafford H. Northcote, Bart., M.P. (Earl of Iddesleigh)	1869–1874
Rt. Hon. George Joachim Goschen, M.P.	1874–1880
Eden Colville	1880–1889
Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, G.C.M.G.	1889–

DEPUTY-GOVERNORS OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

Sir John Robinson, Kt.	1670–1675
Sir James Hayes, Kt.	1675–1685
The Hon. Sir Edward Dering, Kt.	1685–1691
Samuel Clarke	1691–1701
John Nicholson	1701–1710
Thomas Lake	1710–1711
Sir Bibye Lake, Bart.	1711–1712
Captain John Merry	1712–1729
Samuel Jones	1729–1735
Benjamin Pitt	1735–1743
Thomas Knapp	1743–1746
Sir Atwell Lake, Bart.	1746–1750
Sir William Baker, Kt.	1750–1760
Captain John Merry	1760–1765
Bibye Lake	1765–1770
Robert Merry	1770–1774
Samuel Wegg	1774–1782
Sir James Winter Lake, Bart.	1782–1799
Richard Hulse	1799–1805
Nicholas Caesar Corsellis	1805–1806
William Mainwaring	1806–1807
Joseph Berens, Junior	1807–1812
John Henry Pelly	1812–1822
Nicholas Garry	1822–1835
Benjamin Harrison	1835–1839

Andrew Colville	1839–1852
John Shepherd	1852–1856
Henry Hulse Berens	1856–1858
Edward Ellice, M.P.	1858–1863
Sir Curtis Miranda Lampson, Bart.	1863–1871
Eden Colville	1871–1880
Sir John Rose, Bart., G.C.M.G.	1880–1888
Sir Donald A. Smith, G.C.M.G.	1888–1889
The Earl of Lichfield	1889–1898

INTRODUCTION

The history of the Hudson's Bay Company during two centuries of its existence must bring out prominently several matters which are apt now to be lightly remembered. I refer amongst other things to the immense area of country —more than half as large as Europe—over which its control eventually extended, the explorations conducted under its auspices, the successful endeavours, in spite of a strenuous opposition, to retain its hold upon what it regarded as its territory, its friendly relations with the Indians; and, finally, the manner in which its work prepared the way for the incorporation of the illimitable wilderness within the Dominion of Canada.

It is not too much to say that the fur-traders were the pioneers of civilisation in the far West. They undertook the most fatiguing journeys with the greatest pluck and fortitude; they explored the country and kept it in trust for Great Britain. These fur-traders penetrated to the Rocky Mountains and beyond, into what is now known as British Columbia, and even to the far North and North-West, in connection with the extension of trade, and with the

establishment of the famous Hudson's Bay Company posts and forts which were the leading features of the maps of the country until within comparatively recent times. The names of many of these early explorers are perpetuated in its rivers and lakes, and not a few important Arctic discoveries are connected with the names of officers of the Company, such as Hearne, Dease, and Simpson, and, in later times, Dr. John Rae.

The American and Russian Companies which were seeking trade on the Pacific Coast in the early days of the present century, were not able to withstand the activity and enterprise of their British rivals, but for whose discoveries and work, even British Columbia might not have remained British territory. For many years the only civilised occupants of both banks of the Columbia River were the fur-traders, and it is not their fault that the region between it and the International Boundary does not now belong to Canada. Alaska was also leased by the Hudson's Bay Company from Russia, and one cannot help thinking that if that country had been secured by Great Britain, we should probably never have heard of the boundary question, or of the disputes over the seal fisheries in the Behring Sea. However, these things must be accepted as they are; but it will not in any case be questioned that the work of the Company prepared the way for the consolidation of the Dominion of Canada, enabling it to extend its limits from

the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the International Boundary to the far North.

The principal business of the Company in the early days was, of course, the purchasing of furs from the Indians, in exchange for arms, ammunition, clothes, and other commodities imported from the United Kingdom. Naturally, therefore, the prosperity of the Company depended largely upon good relations being maintained with the Indians. The white man trusted the Indian, and the Indian trusted the white man. This mutual confidence, and the friendly relations which were the result, made the transfer of the territory to Canada comparatively easy, when the time for surrender came. It is interesting to note also, that while intent upon trading with the Indians, the Company did not neglect the spread of civilising influences among them. The result of their policy is seen in the relations which have happily existed since 1870 *between the Government and the Indians. There have been none of the difficulties which gave rise to so many disasters in the western parts of the United States. Even in the half-breed disturbance of* 1869–70, *and in that of* 1885, *the Indians, with very few exceptions, could not be induced to take arms against the forces of law and order.*

Although the Red River Settlement was inaugurated and carried out under its auspices, it has been stated, and in terms of reproach, that the Company did not encourage

settlement or colonisation. The statement may have an element of truth in it, but the condition of the country at the time must be borne in mind. Naturally the fur-trade and settlement could not go on side by side. On the other hand, until the country was made accessible, colonisation was not practicable. Settlers could not get there without the greatest difficulty, even for many years after the transfer of the territory took place, or get their produce away. Indeed, until the different provinces of Canada became federated, and were thus in a position to administer the country and provide it with the necessary means of communication, the opening up of its agricultural resources was almost an impossibility. No single province of Canada could have undertaken its administration or development, and neither men nor money were available locally to permit of its blossoming out separately as a colony, or series of provinces.

The work of the Company is still being continued, although of course under somewhat different conditions. The fur-trade is quite as large as ever it was, and the relations of the Company are as cordial as of old with the Indians, and other inhabitants, in the districts remote from settlement, in which this part of the business is largely carried on. It has also adapted itself to the times, and is now one of the leading sources of supply to the settlers in Manitoba, the North-West Territories and British Columbia, and to the prospectors and miners who are engaged in developing the

resources of the Pacific province. Besides, it has a very large stake in the North-West, in view of the millions of acres handed over to it, according to agreement, as the country is surveyed. In fact, it may be stated that the Hudson's Bay Company is as inseparably bound up with the future of Western Canada as it has been with its past.

Among the many things which I might mention, there is room especially for an extended reference to the great and wonderful changes that have been apparent in Manitoba, the North-West Territories and British Columbia, since, in the natural order of things, those parts of Canada passed out of the direct control of the Company. The subject is such a fascinating one, that the tendency is to go on and on. But the reader will doubtless be eager to get to Mr. Beckles Willson's narrative; and I shall therefore content myself with stating, in conclusion, that I congratulate the author on the work he has accomplished, and trust that it will meet with the success it deserves. It cannot fail to be regarded as a most interesting contribution to the history of Canada, and to show, what I firmly believe to be true, that the work of the Hudson's Bay Company was for the advantage of the Empire.

STRATHCONA AND MOUNT ROYAL,
Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company.

LONDON, *June* 1899.

LIST OF PORTRAITS

Prince Rupert . . . . . *Frontispiece*

Le Moyne D'Iberville . . . . . *To face page* 22

Amiral La Pérouse . . . . . „ „ 69

Alexander Henry . . . . . „ „ 108

Samuel Hearne . . . . . „ „ 167

The Earl of Selkirk . . . . . „ „ 208

Edward Ellice . . . . . „ „ 243

Sir John Franklin . . . . . „ „ 311

MAPS

Map showing Hudson Bay Company's Posts *To face page* xxxii

Plans of York and Prince of Wales' Forts . . *page* 331

Contemporary Map showing the Hays' River . . „ 334

MAP showing the HUDSONS BAY COMPANY'S POSTS

Statute Miles
100 50 0 100 200 300 400

\+ Past and Present H.B.C. Forts and Posts
Ft Pitt Names of H.B.C. Forts and Posts

ARCTIC OCEAN
PACIFIC OCEAN
ATLANTIC OCEAN
HUDSON'S BAY
BAFFIN BAY
DAVIS STRAIT
GREENLAND
ALASKA
BRITISH COLUMBIA
UNITED STATES
MANITOBA
ONTARIO
QUEBEC
NEW BRUNSWICK
LABRADOR
BAFFIN LAND
PARRY Is
Melville I.
North Devon
Barrow Str.
Melville Sound
Banks Land
Pr. Albert Land
Prof. Wales Land
Boothia
Melville Peninsula
Fox Channel
Hudson Strait
Southampton Island
Chesterfield Inlet
Marble I.
Mansfield I.
C. Chudleigh
Nachvak B.
Ungava Bay
George R.
Arctic Circle
Yukon R.
Peel R.
Mackenzie R.
Great Bear Lake
Great Slave L.
Athabasca L.
Peace R.
Liard R.
Fraser R.
Columbia R.
Red R.
Saskatchewan R.
Winnipeg L.
Lake Winnipegosis
Lake Manitoba
Reindeer L.
Indian L.
Churchill R.
Nelson R.
Severn R.
Albany R.
Moose R.
Abitibi R.
Ottawa R.
St. Lawrence R.
Lake Superior
Lake Nipigon
Lake Mistassini
Lake Temiscaming
Missouri R.
Columbia R.
Vancouver I.
Queen Charlotte Is
Sitka
Ft Yukon
Ft Selkirk
Ft Halkett
Ft Reliance
Ft Enterprise
Ft Rae
Ft Resolution
Ft Providence
Ft Simpson
Ft Wrigley
Ft Norman
Ft Good Hope
Ft Confidence
Ft Franklin
Old Ft Nelson
Ft Nelson
Ft Halkett
Ft Liard
Ft Frances
Ft Forks
Ft Halkett
Ft Graham
Ft Grahame
Ft McLeod
Ft Dunvegan
Ft St John
Ft Connolly
Ft Simpson
Ft Babine
Ft Fraser
Ft St James
Ft Kamloops
Ft Alexandria
Ft Chilcotin
Ft Langley
Ft Hope
Ft Yale
Ft Colvile
Ft Okanagan
Ft Walla Walla
Ft Nisqually
Ft Vancouver
Ft Umpqua
Ft Simpson
Ft Stikine
Ft Wrangell
Ft Taku
Ft Durrant
Ft Connolly
Ft Halkett
Ft Liard
Ft Nelson
Ft Halkett
Ft Providence
Ft Resolution
Ft Rae
Ft Reliance
Ft Enterprise
Ft Wrigley
Ft Norman
Ft Good Hope
Ft Confidence
Ft Franklin
Old Ft Nelson
Old Ft Halkett
Old Ft Simpson
Old Fort
Old Establishment 1778
New Establishment
Salt River Ho.
Ft Fond du Lac
Ft Chipewyan
Ft Vermilion
Ft Dunvegan
Ft McLeod
Ft Edmonton
Ft Pitt
Ft Victoria
Ft Assiniboine
Ft Augustus
Ft Carlton
Ft Albert
Ft La Corne
Ft Walsh
Ft Ellice
Ft Qu'appelle
Ft Pelly
Ft Alexander
Ft Douglas
Ft Daer
Ft William
Ft Francis
Ft Metabetchouan
Ft Nelson
Ft York
Ft Severn
Ft Weenisk
Ft Moose
Ft Albany
Ft Rupert
Ft George
Ft Mingan
Ft Churchill
Ft Prince of Wales
Churchill Ho.
Nelson Ho.
Oxford Ho.
Cod's I. Ho.
Norway Ho.
Beaver Ho.
Osnaburg Ho.
Eagles Nest
English River
Wabinosh Ho.
Rat Portage
Grand Portage
Sault St. Marie
La Cloche
Nipissing
Ottawa
Montreal
Quebec
Lit Whale R.
Great Whale R.
East Main R.
Hamilton Inlet
Mistassini
Lake St. John
Saguenay
Seven Islands
Bersimis
Manicouagan R.
Trout L.
Cat L.
Long L.
Mattawapiskar R.
Albany R.
Moose R.
Abitibi R.
Missinabi L.
Nipigon
Rainy L.
Lake of the Woods
Grand Portage
Pembina
Red River Settlement
Portage la Prairie
Manitoba Ho.
Touchwood Hills
Carlton
Pitt
Edmonton
Victoria
St Albert
St Ann's
St Paul
Assiniboine
Qu'appelle
Pelly
Ellice
Alexander
Douglas
Daer
Walsh
Calgary
Rocky Mountain Ho.
Jasper Ho.
Athabasca Landing
Lac la Biche
Lac la Grosse
Green L.
Pelican L.
Reindeer L.
Indian L.
Churchill R.
Nelson R.
Grand Rapid
Severn R.
Weenisk R.
Trout L.
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Rocky Mountain Ho.
Jasper Ho.
Athabasca Landing
Lac la Biche
Lac la Grosse
Green L.
Pelican L.

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THE GREAT COMPANY

CHAPTER I

1660–67

EFFECT OF THE RESTORATION ON TRADE — ADVENTURERS AT WHITEHALL—THE EAST INDIA COMPANY MONOPOLY—ENGLISH INTEREST IN NORTH AMERICA—PRINCE RUPERT'S CLAIMS —THE FUR TRADE OF CANADA—AIM OF THE WORK.

THAT page in the nation's history which records the years immediately following the Restoration of the Stewarts to the English throne, has often been regarded as sinister and inauspicious. Crushed and broken by the long strain of civil war, apparently bankrupt in letters, commerce, and arms, above all sick of the restraints imposed upon them by the Roundheads, the nation has too often been represented as abandoning itself wholly to the pursuit of pleasure, while folly and license reigned supreme at court. The almost startling rapidity with which England recovered her pride of place in the commercial world has been too little dwelt upon. Hardly had Charles the Second settled down to enjoy his heritage when the spirit of

mercantile activity began to make itself felt once more The arts of trade and commerce, of discovery and colonisation, which had languished under the Puritan ascendency, revived; the fever of "Imperial Expansion" burst out with an ardour which no probability of failure was able to cool; and the court of the "Merry Monarch" speedily swarmed with adventurers, eager to win his favour for the advancement of schemes to which the chiefs of the Commonwealth would have turned but a deaf ear.

Of just claimants to the royal bounty, in the persons of ruined cavaliers and their children, there was no lack. With these there also mingled, in the throng which daily beset the throne with petitions for grants, charters, patents and monopolies—returned freebooters, buccaneers in embryo, upstarts and company-promoters. Every London tavern and coffee-house resounded with projects for conquest, trade, or the exploitation of remote regions.

From the news-letters and diaries of the period, and from the minutes of the Council of Trade and the Royal Society, one may form an excellent notion of the risks which zealous capital ran during this memorable decade.

For two centuries and more, mercantile speculation had been busy with the far East. There, it was believed, in the realms of Cathay and Hindustan, lay England's supreme market. A large number of the marine expeditions of the sixteenth century were

associated with an enterprise in which the English nation, of all the nations in Europe, had long borne, and long continued to bear, the chief part. From the time of Cabot's discovery of the mainland in 1498, our mariners had dared more and ventured oftener in quest of that passage through the ice and barren lands of the New World which should conduct them to the sunny and opulent countries of the East.

The mercantile revival came; it found the Orient robbed of none of its charm, but monopoly had laid its hand on East India. For over half a century the East India Company had enjoyed the exclusive right of trading in the Pacific between the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn, and the merchants of London therefore were forced to cast about for other fields of possible wealth. As far as North America was concerned, the merest reference to a map of this period will reveal the very hazy conception which then prevailed as to this vast territory. Few courtiers, as yet, either at Whitehall or Versailles, had begun to concern themselves with nice questions of frontier, or the precise delimitation of boundaries in parts of the continent which were as yet unoccupied, still less in those hyperborean regions described by the mariners Frobisher, Button, and Fox. To these voyagers, themselves, the northern half of the continent was merely a huge barrier to the accomplishment of their designs.

English right to Hudson's Bay.

Yet in spite of this destructive creed, it had long

been a cardinal belief in the nation that the English crown had by virtue of Cabot's, and of subsequent discoveries, a right to such territories, even though such right had never been actively affirmed.[1]

In the year 1664 the King granted the territory now comprised in the States of New York, New Jersey, and Delaware to his brother, the Duke of York, and the courtiers became curious to know what similar mark of favour would be bestowed upon his Majesty's yet unrewarded cousin, Prince Rupert, Duke of Cumberland and Count Palatine of the Rhine.[2]

The Duke of York succeeded in wresting his new Transatlantic possession from the Dutch, and the fur-trade of New Amsterdam fell into English hands. Soon afterwards the first cargo of furs from that region arrived in the Thames.

[1] "The great maritime powers of Europe," said Chief Justice Marshall, "discovered and visited different parts of this Continent at nearly the same time. The object was too immense for any of them to grasp the whole; and the claimants were too powerful to submit to the exclusive or unreasonable pretensions of any single potentate. To avoid bloody conflicts, which might terminate disastrously to all, it was necessary for the nations of Europe to establish some principle which all would acknowledge and which would decide their respective rights as between themselves. This principle, suggested by the actual state of things, was, 'that discovery gave title to the Government by whose subjects or by whose authority it was made, against all other European governments, which title might be consummated by possession.'"

[2] "Prince Rupert, we hear, is of no mind to press his Plantation claims until this Dutch warre is over. A Jamaica pattent is spoke of." —*Pleasant Passages*, 1665.

Naturally, it was not long before some of the keener-sighted London merchants began to see behind this transaction vast possibilities of future wealth. The extent of the fur-trade driven in Canada by the French was no secret.[1] Twice annually, for many years, had vessels anchored at Havre, laden with the skins of fox, marten, and beaver, collected and shipped by the Company of the Hundred Associates or their successors in the Quebec monopoly. A feeling was current that England ought by right to have a larger share in this promising traffic, but, it was remarked, "it is not well seen by those cognizant of the extent of the new plantations how this is to be obtained, unless we dislodge the French as we have the Dutch, which his present Majesty would never countenance."

Charles had little reason to be envious of the posses-

[1] As early as 1605, Quebec had been established, and had become an important settlement; before 1630, the Beaver and several other companies had been organised, at Quebec, for carrying on the fur-trade in the West, near and around the Great Lakes and in the North-West Territory; that the enterprise and trading operations of these French Companies, and of the French colonists generally, extended over vast regions of the northern and the north-western portions of the continent; that they entered into treaties with the Indian tribes and nations, and carried on a lucrative and extensive fur-trade with the natives. In the prosecution of their trade and other enterprises these adventurers evinced great energy, courage, and perseverance. They had, according to subsequent French writers, extended their hunting and trading operations to the Athabasca country. It was alleged that some portions of the Athabasca country had before 1640 been visited and traded in, and to some extent occupied by the French traders in Canada and their Beaver Company. This is, of course, pure folly. From 1640 to 1670 these discoveries and trading settlements had nevertheless considerably increased in number and importance.

sion, by his neighbour Lewis, of the country known as New France.

French fur-trade.

Those tragic and melancholy narratives, the "Relations des Jesuites," had found their way to the English Court. From these it would seem that the terrors of cold, hunger, hardships, and Indian hostility, added to the cost and difficulties of civil government, and the chronic prevalence of official intrigue, were hardly compensated for by the glories of French ascendency in Canada. The leading spirits of the fur-trade then being prosecuted in the northern wilds, were well aware that they derived their profits from but an infinitesimal portion of the fur-trading territory; the advantages of extension and development were perfectly apparent to them; but the difficulties involved in dealing with the savage tribes, and the dangers attending the establishment of further connections with the remote interior, conspired to make them content with the results attained by the methods then in vogue. The security from rivalry which was guaranteed to them by their monopoly did not fail to increase their aversion to a more active policy. Any efforts, therefore, which were made to extend the French Company's operations were made by Jesuit missionaries, or by individual traders acting without authority.

Such, in brief, was the state of affairs in the year 1666 when two intrepid bushrangers, employees of the

old Company,[1] dissatisfied with their prospects under the new *régime*, sought their way out from the depths of the wilderness to Quebec, and there propounded to the Intendant, Jean Talon, a scheme for the extension of the fur-trade to the shores of Hudson's Bay. This enterprising pair saw their project rejected, and as a sequel to this rejection came the inception and establishment of an English association,[2] which subsequently obtained a charter from the King, under the name and title of "The Governor and Company of Merchants-Adventurers trading into Hudson's Bay."

To narrate the causes which first led to the formation of this Company, the contemporary interest it excited, the thrilling adventures of its early servants, of the wars it waged with the French and drove so valiantly to a victorious end; its vicissitudes and gradual growth; the fierce and bloody rivalries it combated and eventually overbore; its notable expeditions of research by land and sea; the character of

[1] In 1663 the charter of the Compagnie des Cents Associés, granted by Richelieu in 1627, was ceded to the Crown. In 1665 the new Association, "La Compagnie des Indes Occidentals," received its charter.

[2] Several noblemen and other public-spirited Englishmen, not unmindful of the discovery and right of the Crown of England to those parts in America, designed at their own charge to adventure the establishing of a regular and constant trade in Hudson's Bay, and to settle forts and factories, whereby to invite the Indian nations (who live like savages, many hundred leagues up the country) down to their factories, for a constant and yearly intercourse of trade, which was never attempted by such settlements, and to reside in that inhospitable country, before the aforesaid English adventurers undertook the same."—*Company's Memorial*, 1699.

the vast country it ruled and the Indians inhabiting it; and last but not least, the stirring and romantic experiences contained in the letters and journals of the Great Company's factors and traders for a period of above two centuries—such will be the aim and purpose of this work.

CHAPTER II

1659–1666

GROSEILLIERS AND RADISSON—THEIR PEREGRINATIONS IN THE NORTH-WEST—THEY RETURN TO QUEBEC AND LAY THEIR SCHEME BEFORE THE GOVERNOR—REPULSED BY HIM THEY PROCEED TO NEW ENGLAND—AND THENCE SAIL FOR FRANCE, WHERE THEY ENDEAVOUR TO INTEREST M. COLBERT.

THE year 1659, notable in England as the last of the Puritan ascendency and the herald of a stirring era of activity, may be reckoned as the first with which the annals of the Great Company are concerned. It is in this year that we first catch a glimpse of two figures who played an important part in shaping its destinies. Little as they suspected it, the two intrepid fur-traders, Groseilliers and Radisson, who in the spring of that year pushed their way westward from Quebec to the unknown shores of Lake Superior, animated in this, as in all their subsequent exploits, by a spirit of adventure as well as a love of gain, were to prove the ancestors of the Great Company.

Medard Chouart, the first of this dauntless pair, was born in France, near Meaux, and had emigrated to Quebec when he was a little over sixteen years old. His father had been a pilot, and it was designed that

the son should succeed him in the same calling. But long before this intention could be realised he fell in with a Jesuit, returned from Canada, who was full of thrilling tales about the New France beyond the seas; and so strongly did these anecdotes, with their suggestion of a rough and joyous career in the wilderness, appeal to his nature, that he determined to take his own part in the glowing life which the priest depicted. In 1641 he was one of the fifty-two *emigrés* who sailed with the heroic Maissoneuve from Rochelle. Five years later we find him trading amongst the Hurons, the tribe whose doom was already sealed by reason of the enmity and superior might of the Iroquois; and at the close of another year comes the record of his first marriage. The bride is Etienne, the daughter of a pilot, Abraham Martin of Quebec, the "eponymous hero" of that plateau adjoining Quebec where, a century later, was to take place the mortal struggle between Wolfe and Montcalm.

Groseilliers' first marriage.

It was probably soon after this marriage that Chouart adopted the title "des Groseilliers," derived from a petty estate which his father had in part bequeathed to him.

Not long did his wife survive the marriage; and she died without leaving any legacy of children to alleviate his loss. But the young adventurer was not destined to remain for any length of time disconsolate. Within a year of his wife's death, there arrived in the colony a brother and sister named Pierre and

Marguerite Radisson, Huguenots of good family, who had been so persistently hounded in France by the persecution which sought to exterminate their community, that the one key to happiness had seemed to them to lie beyond the seas. No sooner had their father died than they bade farewell to France and sailed for Canada, there to start a new life amidst new and more tranquil surroundings.

With this couple young Groseilliers soon struck up an acquaintance; and so rapidly did the intimacy ripen that before long he was united to the sister in matrimony, and to the brother in a partnership for the pursuit of commercial adventure. The double union proved doubly fortunate; for Marguerite seems to have made a well-suited wife, and Pierre, though in birth and education superior to Groseilliers, was no whit less hardy and adventurous, nor in any respect less fitted for the arduous tasks which their rough life imposed upon them. The two speedily became fast friends and associates in enterprise, and thus united they soon took their place as the leading spirits of the settlement at Three Rivers. Here, in 1656, Radisson married for the first time, his bride being a Mlle. Elizabeth Herault, one of the few Protestant young women in the whole of Canada. Groseilliers, who had been long disgusted at the priestly tyranny of which he had seen so much in Canada, probably needed but little inducement to embrace the Protestant religion, if indeed this had not been stipulated upon at the time

of his marriage. At all events, we now find him reputed to be among the Protestants of the Colony; some of whom were, in spite of the bitter prejudice against them, the boldest and most successful spirits the fur-trading community of that period had to show.

Radisson, like Groseilliers,[1] had the misfortune to lose his wife soon after their marriage; but, like his comrade, he too sought consolation in a fresh marriage. This time he allied himself with the daughter of a zealous English Protestant, who afterwards became Sir John Kirke. It was to the brothers of this Kirke that the great Champlain, thirty years before, had surrendered Quebec.

Radisson weds Miss Kirke.

With this introduction to the characters of the two remarkable men whose fortunes were to become so closely entwined with that of the Hudson's Bay Company, we may pass to their early efforts to extend the fur-trade beyond those limits which the distracted and narrow-minded officers of the Compagnie des Cent Associés thought it necessary to observe.

Reaching the shore of Lake Superior in the early summer of 1659, Radisson and Groseilliers travelled

[1] Each scribe seemed to have followed his own fancy in spelling our hero's name. I find Groiseliez, Grozeliers, Groseliers, Groiziliers, Grosillers, Groiseleiz, and Groseillers. Charlevoix spells it Groseilliers. Dr. Dionne, following Radisson's Chouard, writes Chouart. But, as Dr. Brymner justly observes, "he is as little known by that name as Voltaire by his real name of Arouet, he being always spoken of by the name of des Groseilliers, changed in one affidavit into 'Gooseberry.'" The name literally translated is, of course, Gooseberry-bushes.

for six days in a south-westerly direction, and then came upon a tribe of Indians incorporated with the Hurons, known as the Tionnontates, or the Tobacco Nation. These people dwelt in the territory between the sources of the Black and Chippeway Rivers, in what is now the State of Wisconsin, whence, in terror of the bloody enmity of the Iroquois, they afterwards migrated to the small islands in Lake Michigan at the entrance of Green Bay.

During their temporary sojourn with this branch of the unhappy Hurons the two pioneering traders heard constant mention of a deep, wide, and beautiful river—comparable to the St. Lawrence—to the westward, and for a time they were half tempted by their ever-present thirst for novelty to proceed in that direction. Other counsels, however, seem to have prevailed; for instead of striking out for the unknown river of the west they journeyed northward, and wintered with the Nadouechiouecs or Sioux, who hunted and fished among the innumerable lakes of Minnesota. Soon afterwards they came upon a separate band of war-like Sioux, known as the Assiniboines, a prosperous and intelligent tribe, who lived in skin and clay lodges and were "familiar with the use of charcoal."

A Route to the Bay.

From these Assiniboines, Radisson and Groseilliers first heard of the character and extent of that great watery tract to the north, named by the English explorers "Hudson's Bay," which was to be the scene of their later labours; and

not only did they glean news of its nature, but they also succeeded in obtaining information as to the means of reaching it.

In August 1660, the two adventurers found their way back to Montreal, after over a year's absence. They were accompanied by three hundred Indians, and in possession of sixty canoes laden with furs, which they undertook to dispose of to the advantage of the savages and themselves. As they had anticipated, they found the little colony and its leaders deeply interested in their reports of the extent and richness of the fur-producing countries to the westward, as well as in their description of the unfamiliar tribes inhabiting that region. The sale of the furs having resulted in a handsome profit, Groseilliers announced to his brother-in-law his intention of making the journey on his own account. There was no dearth of volunteers eager to embark in the enterprise, and from those who offered their services he chose six Frenchmen —*coureurs des bois* or bushrangers; and having provided himself with an ample outfit, turned his footsteps once more to the prairies of the west, leaving Radisson to rejoin his wife and sister at Three Rivers.

On the eve of his departure the Jesuit Fathers, distrusting Groseilliers' religious proclivities and suspecting that he might attempt to influence the Assiniboines, insisted upon one of their number accompanying him. The priest chosen for this arduous mission was the aged missionary Réné Ménard, who, in spite of his

physical frailty, was still undaunted by any prospect of peril; though he was, on this occasion, prevailed upon to allow his servant Guérin to accompany him. It was the priest's last journey. When Groseilliers again reached Montreal, after a season in the wilderness as prosperous as its forerunner, he bore the mournful news that Ménard had been massacred, and his body, beyond question, devoured by a fierce band of Indians.

This voyage, besides showing lucrative results, also proved a memorable one for Groseilliers, inasmuch as it was during his winter's sojourn with the distant Assiniboines that he acquired information which affected his whole subsequent career. There can be no question that it was the knowledge he obtained from this tribe of a convenient route to Hudson's Bay, by way of Lake Superior, and of a system of trade with the tribes dwelling on or in proximity to that unknown sea, that caused him to set out once again in May 1662 for the west. He was accompanied by ten men, all of whom were disaffected towards the powers which then controlled the fur-trade in New France. The combination of good fortune and *esprit de corps* among his followers proved so successful that when, after a year's absence, he returned to the eastern colonies, the number of furs he brought back was sufficiently great to render a simultaneous disposal of all the packs inadvisable. He adopted the wise course of dividing them into

three consignments, and these were sold respectively at Montreal, Three Rivers, and Quebec. Henceforward but one idea possessed Groseilliers—a journey to the great fur-lands of the north. It should be his life's work to exploit the fur-trade of Hudson's Bay. Already he saw himself rich—richer even than the merchant-princes of old Rochelle.

A new fur Company.

But alas for his plans, the official laxity and dissensions which had made it possible for himself and others thus to infringe with impunity, the general monopoly granted by the King came to a sudden end. A fresh patent for a new Company was issued by the Crown; a new Governor, M. d'Avagour, entered upon the scene, and the rigorous measures enacted against private traders drove many of these over to the English and the Dutch.

A commission from M. d'Avagour, dated the 10th of May 1663, conveyed permission to one Couture to remove with five men to the bottom of the Great Bay to the North of Canada, consequent upon the requisition of some Indians, who had returned to Quebec to ask for aid to conduct and assist them in their affairs. This same Couture afterwards certified, or the French Government certified in his stead, that he really undertook this voyage, and "erected anew upon the lands at the bottom of the said Bay a cross and the arms of the King engraved on copper, and placed between two plates of lead at the foot of a large tree." Much justifiable doubt has been cast upon

this story, and at a much later period, when French and English interests were contesting hotly for the sovereignty of the territory surrounding Hudson's Bay, an expedition was sent in search of the boasted memorials, but no trace of the cross or the copper escutcheon could be found. There seems every probability that the allegation, or the subsequent statement of an allegation of this description, was false.

Groseilliers had thus to reckon with the new fur-trading proprietors of Quebec, who were to prove themselves less complaisant than the old. While severely interdicting traders from going in search of peltries, they reasoned that the produce would ultimately find its way into their hands, without the need of any such solicitation. And though Groseilliers persistently explained to them that such policy of interdiction was really a short-sighted one; that the Indians could not be always depended upon to bring their own furs to the Company's mart; and that no great time would elapse before the English or Dutch would push their way westward to Lake Superior, and so acquire an unequalled opportunity of developing the resources of the northern regions; neither his criticism and advice (founded on personal knowledge of the unstable Indian character), nor the apprehensions of rivalry, which he showed good grounds for entertaining, had any power to move the officials of the Hundred Associates. Neither argument, entreaty, nor prognostications of danger

would induce them to look with any favour upon Groseilliers' project, or entertain his proposals.

Groseilliers afterwards hinted that it was prejudice against his adopted religion which really lay at the bottom of this complete rejection of his scheme, and accounted also for the Company's refusal to avail themselves of his services otherwise than as a mere salaried servant. Such was the situation when he sought the advice of Radisson, and it is not unlikely that it was the counsels of his brother-in-law which induced him to resolve upon a bold step in the furtherance of his cherished project. It was well known that the English colonists settled in New England were putting forth the strongest efforts to secure a share of the fur-trade of the North. Their allies, the redoubtable Iroquois, had upon several occasions waylaid and plundered the Huron tribes, who were conveying their cargoes to Quebec and Montreal, and had delivered these into the hands of the English. Farther westward, the Dutch were indefatigable in their endeavours to divert the fur-traffic of the North from the St. Lawrence to the Hudson. But the Dutch had been vanquished by the English; New Amsterdam was now New York; and it was English brains and English money which now controlled the little colony and the untravelled lands which lay beyond it. It was to the English, therefore, that the indomitable adventurer now determined to apply. Madame Radisson had relatives in Boston; her

Groseilliers in Boston.

father was an intimate friend of the Governor. Relying on such influences as these, but still more on the soundness of his project, Groseilliers made his way to Boston by way of Acadia.

Early in 1664 we find the Mother Superior of the Ursuline Nuns at Quebec remarking of Groseilliers that "as he had not been successful in making a fortune, he was seized with a fancy to go to New England to better his condition. He excited a hope among the English that he had found a passage to the Sea of the North."

The good Mother Superior was deceived. It was no part of Groseilliers' plan to seek a passage to the Sea of the North; but one can hardly doubt that he found it highly politic that such a report should obtain currency in Quebec. The fur-trade of the North, and the fur-trade alone, was Groseilliers' lode-stone; but in spite of all it had cost him to acquire the knowledge he already possessed, he was ready to abandon the land and fresh-water route, and seek the shores of Hudson's Bay from the side of the Atlantic Ocean.

Doubtless many causes operated to alter his original plan; but there can be little question that the most potent was the opposition of the Quebec Company. Yet had the sea-route not existed, even the opposition of that Company would not have sufficed to baulk him of a fulfilment of his designs. He would not have been the first French trader, even at that

early day in the history of the rival colonies, to circumvent his countrymen, and, taking advantage of their confined area of activity, to conduct negotiations with the Indians surrounding the most distant outposts of their territory. The proceeding would have been hazardous had the Company possessed the force necessary to assert its rights to the trade of the whole northern and north-western country; but the new company did not as yet possess the force. The most real danger Groseilliers had to fear was that, if he persisted in his endeavours to draw away the trade of the northern tribes, he might be outlawed, and his property, and that of his brother-in-law Radisson, confiscated. Groseilliers had left his wife and his son in Canada, and he went to work therefore with considerable caution.

It has been asserted, and perhaps with excellent point, that Groseilliers may have been very powerfully influenced in the abandonment of his land and fresh-water route by obtaining an entirely new idea of the configuration of northern North America. In the maps which were likely at that time to have found their way to Quebec, the northern regions are but very dimly defined; and with the knowledge of geography gained only from these maps Groseilliers could hardly have realised the accessibility of the approach by sea. It seems likely, therefore, that the change of route was not even thought of until Groseilliers had had his interview with Radisson; it was probably

Radisson—with his superior geographical knowledge and more thorough comprehension (through his kinship with the Kirkes, all famous mariners) of the discoveries made by the English in the northern parts—who advocated the sea-route. The idea must have grown upon him gradually. His countrymen took it for granted that the whole northern country was theirs, apparently assuming the sole mode of access to be by land. The sea-route never seems to have occurred to them, or if they thought of it at all, it was dismissed as dangerous and impracticable for purposes of commerce. The configuration of the northern country, the form and extent of the seas, certainly the character of the straits and islands, were to them little known. Secure in what they regarded as nominal possession, forgetful that English mariners had penetrated and named these northern waters, the officials of the Canada Company were content to pursue a policy of *laissez faire* and to deprecate all apprehensions of rivalry.

Singular coincidence! More than a century was to elapse and another Company with ten times the wealth, the power, the sovereignty wielded by this one: not French—for France had then been shorn of her dominion and authority—but English, scorning the all-conquering, all-pervading spirit of mercantile England, was to pursue the same policy, and to suffer the loss of much blood and treasure in consequence of such pursuit.

In Boston, the main difficulty which Groseilliers had to face was a scarcity of wealth. His scheme was approved by many of the leading spirits there, and his assertions as to the wealth of the fur-bearing country were not doubted. But at that period the little Puritan colony was over-strained in carrying out projects for its own security and maintenance, not to mention plans for enrichment much nearer home.[1] And it was pointed out to him that so long as schemes which were regarded as essential to safety could only with difficulty be supported, no pecuniary assistance could be rendered for an extraneous project, however promising its nature.

Groseilliers finds no patrons.

There were in Boston at this time, however, four personages whom the King had sent as envoys, in 1664, to force the Dutch to evacuate Manhattan, and who were also a kind of commission instructed to visit the English colonies, and to hear and rule their complaints. They were Richard Nichols, Robert Carr, George Cartwright, and Samuel Maverick. One of these, Colonel Carr, it is said, strongly urged Groseil-

[1] For example, the adjoining colony of Connecticut had appealed to them for help in their laudable enterprise of despoiling the Dutch of their possessions. Raids upon the territory and trading-posts controlled by the Dutch were a constantly recurring feature in the history of those times, and nearly the whole of the zeal and substance remaining to the English colonists in Connecticut and Virginia, after their periodical strifes with the Indians, were devoted to forcing the unhappy Hollanders to acknowledge the sovereignty of King Charles of England.

LE MOYNE D'IBERVILLE

From an etching

liers to proceed to England and offer his services to the King.

Although unable to secure there the patronage he desired, Groseilliers' visit to Boston is seen to be not quite barren of profit. He fell in besides with an intelligent sea-faring man, Zachary Gillam, who was then captain and part-owner of a small vessel, the *Nonsuch*, with which he plied a trade between the colony and the mother-country. Gillam expressed himself eager to assist in the project as far as lay in his power, and offered his services in case an equipment could be found. A long correspondence passed between Groseilliers and his brother-in-law in Canada, the latter very naturally urging that as the New England project had failed, it would be advisable not to seek further aid from the English, but that, as nothing was to be expected from the Quebec Company, or the merchants of Canada, it would be as well to journey to France, and put the matter before the French Court.

Zachary Gillam.

Groseilliers allowed himself to be persuaded; and he wrote back begging Radisson to join him in Boston with the object of accompanying him to France. In June 1665, both the adventurers set sail in the *Nonsuch* for Plymouth, whence in all likelihood they proceeded direct to Havre.

It would be unprofitable, and at best but a repetition, to describe the difficulties Groseilliers and his brother-in-law met with in Paris, the petitions they

presented and the many verbal representations they made. In the midst of their ill-success Colonel Carr came to Paris. There is extant a letter of his to Lord Arlington. "Having heard," says he, "by the French in New England of a great traffic in beavers" to be got in the region of Hudson's Bay, and "having had proofs of the assertions" of the two adventurers, he thought "the finest present he could make to his Majesty" was to despatch these men to him.

The ambassador pondered on this, and at last decided to entrust Groseilliers with a letter to a certain prince—a friend of his—and a patron of the Arts and Sciences. Leaving Radisson despondent in Paris, therefore, the other adventurer crossed the Channel and found himself, with a beating heart, for the first time in the English capital.

CHAPTER III

1640–67

Prince Rupert—His Character—Serves through the Civil War—His Naval Expedition in the West Indies—Residence in France—And ultimately in London—He receives Groseilliers and introduces him to the King.

It was a fortunate chance for Medard Chouart des Groseilliers that threw him, as we shall see, into the hands of such a man as Rupert, a prince of England and Bohemia.

A dashing soldier, a daring sailor, a keen and enlightened student and a man of parts, at the age of forty-seven Rupert still worshipped adventure as a fetish. Irresistibly attracted by anything that savoured of novelty, there was perhaps no other noble in England more likely to listen to such a project as the Canadian was prepared to pour into his ear, no prince in the whole of Europe more likely to succumb to its charm.

Rupert may, on good grounds, be considered one of the most remarkable men of that age. He was the third son of the King of Bohemia by the Princess Elizabeth Stuart, eldest daughter of James I. In common with most German princes he had been educated for the army; and, as he used to observe

himself in after years, there was no profession better fitted for a prince provided he could be allowed to *fight battles.* It was a maxim of his that the arts of patience, of strategy, and parleying with the enemy should be left to statesmen and—caitiffs; and it can be said with truth of Rupert that no one could possibly have acted more completely in accordance with his maxim than himself. "Than Prince Rupert," wrote one chronicler, "no man is more courageous or intrepid. He can storm a citadel, but, alas, he can never keep it. A lion in the fray, he is a very lamb, tho' a fuming one, if a siege is called for."

Youthful, high-spirited and of comely appearance, Rupert found his way to England during his twentieth year to offer his services to his royal uncle, King Charles I. The country was then on the brink of a civil war; parliament had proved refractory; the Puritan forces had already assembled; and in a few months the first blow was struck. The young Prince placed himself at the head of a troop of cavaliers, and soon all England was ringing with the fame of his exploits. On more than one occasion did Cromwell have reason to remember the prowess of "fiery Prince Rupert."

The Great Company's Founder.

Such dashing tactics and spontaneous strategy, however, could not always prevail. He was charged with the defence of Bristol, with what result is a matter of common historical knowledge. His own observation on this episode in his career is an admirable epitome of his character,

as comprehensive as it is brief, "I have no stomach for sieges."

Charles wrote him a letter of somewhat undue severity, in which he exhibited all the asperity of his character as well as his ignorance of the situation. Perhaps if he had realised that the circumstances would have rendered the retention of Bristol impossible even to a Cæsar or a Turenne, he might have written in a more tolerant strain; but it is not very probable. In any case the letter cut Rupert to the heart.

Before his final overthrow Charles, indeed, relented from his severity, and created his nephew Earl of Holdernesse and Duke of Cumberland, granting him also a safe conduct to France, which was honoured by the parliamentary leaders.

Thenceforward for a few years Rupert's career is directly associated with the high seas. On the revolt of the fleet from the control of the Commonwealth he made his way on board of one of the King's vessels, and figured in several naval battles and skirmishes. But even here the result was a foregone conclusion. The bulk of the ships and crews still remaining loyal were rapidly captured or sunk, and the remnant, of which Rupert assumed command, was exceedingly small. He began by sailing to Ireland, whither he was pursued by Popham and Blake, who very quickly blocked him up in the harbour of Kinsale. But the Puritan captains were deceived, if, as it appears, they

fancied the Prince an easy prey. Rupert was no more the sailor than he had been the soldier to brook so facile a capture. He effected a bold escape, immediately under their guns. But realising his helplessness to engage the Puritan fleet in open combat, he inaugurated a series of minor conflicts, a kind of guerilla warfare, which, to our modern notions, would best be classified under the head of privateering, to use no harsher term.

The Spanish Main was at that period an excellent ground for operations of this kind, and with very little delay Rupert was soon very busy with his small but gallant fleet in those waters. Here the commander of the little *Reformation* and his convoys spent three years with no little pecuniary profit to himself and crew. On more than one occasion his exploits in the neighbourhood of the West Indies bore no distant resemblance to piracy, as he boarded impartially not only English, Dutch, and Spanish ships, but also those flying the French colours. Howbeit on one occasion, being advised that the master of one craft was a Frenchman, he generously forebore to reap the profits of his valour out of respect to the monarch with whom both his cousins, Charles and James, had found a refuge. He insisted that the plunder should be restored. Albeit, on the whole, Rupert seems to have had little conscience in the matter. The mere excitement of such adventures alone delighted him, although it would scarce have

A resemblance to Piracy.

satisfied his crews. There is reason to suppose that he himself was not actuated primarily by the mere love of gain. It is known that several of his captains returned with large fortunes; Rupert's own profits were long a matter for conjecture. Even at his death they could not be approximately ascertained; for while he left a goodly fortune, comprising jewels valued at twenty thousand pounds, much of this fortune was acquired legitimately since these stirring days of his youth; and no small part was derived from his share in the Hudson's Bay Company.

The exiled prince, in whose name Rupert was always extremely careful to conduct his depredations on the prosperous commerce of the West Indies, does not appear himself to have derived much material advantage therefrom. It was true the terror of that name was already industriously spread in those waters, and this perhaps was some consolation for the contempt with which it was regarded by the insolent and usurping Puritans. In a newspaper of the period, *Pleasant Passages*, I find under date of October 15, 1652, the following quaint comment:—

"Prince Rupert hath lately seized on some good prizes and he keeps himself far remote; and makes his kinsman, Charles Stuart, make a leg for some cullings of his windfalls."

Rupert after a time transferred the scene of his operations to the Azores, where after some collisions with the Portuguese, he met with a catastrophe so

severe as to compel him to permanently desist from his predatory operations. A violent storm came on, and the *Reformation* and his entire fleet perished, no fewer than 360 souls being lost on the flagship. It was with difficulty that the Prince and twelve of his companions, including his brother Maurice, escaped with a portion of the treasure. A contemporary newswriter records that Rupert had landed at Nantes with ten thousand pounds or so, "'tis said by those best informed. The King hath sent his carriage to meet him at Orleans."

Loss of the *Reformation.*

Charles, who was of course the King mentioned, was then in high hopes of obtaining funds from his cousin Rupert, which might enable him to make an effort for the recovery of his crown. But the King, minus a throne, was destined to be disappointed. Rupert did not yet seem prepared to disgorge, acting, it is easy to divine, upon advice.[1]

"No money for his Majesty out of all this," forms the burden of numerous letters written by the faithful Edward Hyde, afterwards to become the Lord Chancellor Clarendon.

"The money the King should have received!" he complains, in an epistle addressed to Sir Richard Browne. "Why, Rupert is so totally governed by the Lord Keeper, Sir Edward Herbert, that the King

[1] "We have another great officer," records *Pleasant Passages* in another budget of news from Paris, "Prince Ruperte, Master of the Horse."

knows him not. The King hasn't had a penny, and Rupert pretends the King owes him more than ever I was worth."

Hyde had no love for the Lord Keeper of the exiled court; but according to several contemporary writers, the buccaneering Prince looked upon Herbert as "an oracle" (to quote the diarist Evelyn), and chose, for a time at least, to spend most of his gains in his own way.

But Rupert did not persist in the course suggested by his friend Herbert. Soon afterwards he is announced to have made Charles a present of two thousand pounds, for which the King expressed his profound satisfaction by attaching him immediately to the royal household.

A little later, in 1654, there is recorded the following, printed in the "Loyal Gentleman at Court."

"Prince Rupert flourishes highly here, with his troop of blackamoors; and so doth his cousin Charles, they having shared the money made of his prize goods at Nantz."

It was in this year that Rupert seems to have engaged one William Strong, a cavalier who had lost all he possessed, to replace John Holder as his private secretary, a circumstance worthy of mention, inasmuch as it was Strong who was to figure later as the intermediary between his master and the adventurer Groseilliers in London.

Rupert's Secretary.

There is a passage of this period which describes Rupert as he appeared in Paris, "a straight and

comely man, very dark-featured," probably owing to exposure in warm climates, "with jet-black hair and a great passion for dress." He is often referred to in news-letters and diaries of the time under the sobriquet of the "Black Prince."

"Our Black Prince Ruperte," records one, "has had a narrow escape from drowning in the Seine; but by the help of one of his blackamoors escaped."

This was perhaps the period of the closest friendship between Charles and his Bohemian cousin; inasmuch as a decided coolness had already arisen on the part of the exiled monarch and his brother, the Duke of York. This coolness at length terminated in a quarrel, and a separation in the ensuing year at Bruges. The Duke advised Rupert to have no further dealings with his royal brother, a piece of counsel which the Prince wisely, and fortunately for himself, neglected to entertain, for had he acted otherwise, it is extremely doubtful if at the Restoration he would have been in a position to demand any favours at the monarch's hands. James, probably on this score, never afterwards professed much cordiality towards his kinsman, Rupert.

In the years between 1656 and 1665, Rupert spent much of his time in cultivating science and the arts. There are a hundred evidences of his extraordinary ingenuity. A mere list of his devices and inventions, as printed at his decease in 1682, almost entitles him to be considered the Edison of his day, a day in which inventors were rare. Yet in the period before the

outbreak of the Dutch war his activity was by no means limited to the laboratory which he had constructed for himself in Kings' Bench Walk, Temple, or to his study at Windsor. None could have exhibited greater versatility. In April 1662 he was sworn a member of the Privy Council; he also became a member of the Tangier Commission; and in December of the same year he was unanimously elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. He already cut a prominent figure as a patron of commerce, being appointed a member of the Council of Trade, and taking an active part in the promotion of commerce with Africa as a member of the Royal African Company.

A patron of commerce.

With all his sympathies and activities, however, it is very clear that Rupert did not enjoy very great favour at Court. He was suspected of holding his royal cousin in not very high esteem, and of entertaining pronounced opinions on the subject of the royal prerogative; whatever the cause, his influence at Whitehall was not always fortunate. Seeing his councils neglected on several occasions, he kept aloof, and the courtiers, taking as they supposed their cue from their master, made light of his past achievements, finding in his surrender of the city of Bristol a specially suitable subject for their derision.

In 1664 we find in Pepys' Diary that Rupert had been "sent to command the Guinny Fleet. Few pleased, as he is accounted an unhappy [*i.e.* unlucky]

man." As a consequence of these sentiments, which Rupert was soon destined by his valour to alter, one Captain Holmes was sent instead. Nevertheless it was known at Court that Rupert desired a naval employment, and as the authorities found that their estimate of his abilities was not mistaken, he was in 1666 selected to command the fleet against the Dutch, in conjunction with the Duke of Albemarle. His conduct was most exemplary. On one occasion he wrested a victory from the Dutch, and again in the month of June beat them soundly, pursuing them into their own harbour. Returning to England on the cessation of hostilities, he found himself in much higher favour at Court. But with a single exception, forthwith to be narrated, Rupert sought no favours at the hands of his royal relations from this moment until the day of his death. He was content to pursue an even career in comparative solitude, a circumstance for which a serious physical ailment, which soon overtook him and for a time threatened his life, was no doubt in some measure responsible. The fire which distinguished his youth was exchanged, we are told, for good temper and sedateness. He was credited with writing an autobiography; if the report be true, it is a pity there remains no tangible evidence of such a performance. It is certain that his correspondence was so large as to entail the continuous employment of a secretary, William Strong; but prior to the inception of the Hudson's Bay project,

it probably related almost entirely to his chemical and scientific researches and achievements.

In May 1667, the Prince's secretary opened a letter from Lord Arlington, then English ambassador at Paris, intimating that one M. des Groseilliers, a Canadian fur-trader, would be the bearer of an introductory letter from himself to his Highness. He was convinced that the French were managing the fur-trade of New France very clumsily, and he added that Monsieur des Groseilliers seemed as much disaffected towards the new company lately chartered by the French king as towards the old. There is no reason, in the writer's opinion, why English men of commerce should not avail themselves of opportunities and instruments, such as the weak policy of their rivals now afforded, for obtaining a share in the northern fur-trade.

Unfortunately Rupert was at first unable to see the adventurer who had travelled so far. The cause of the delay is not quite clear, but it appears plausible to suppose that it was due to the Prince's illness. He had already undergone the operation of trepanning, and it was found necessary to still continue treatment for the disease to which he had been subject. At any rate it was a fortnight or three weeks before the first interview took place, and the Prince and the French trader did not meet until the 4th of June. The result of this interview was that Prince Rupert promised his credit for the scheme. Three days later he sent

for Groseilliers, who found on his arrival in the Prince's apartments several gentlemen, among whom Lord Craven, Sir John Robinson, and Mr. John Portman appear to have been numbered. In a week from this conference both Radisson, Groseilliers and Portman travelled to Windsor Castle at the request of the Prince. There is no record of what then passed, but there is mention of a further meeting in a letter written by Oldenburgh, the secretary of the Royal Society, to Robert Boyle in America.

Rupert sends for Groseilliers.

"Surely I need not tell you from hence," he wrote, "what is said here with great joy of the discovery of a north-west passage by two Englishmen and one Frenchman, lately represented by them to his Majesty at Oxford, and answered by the grant of a vessel to sail into Hudson's Bay and channel into the South Sea."

From this it would appear that Radisson was then popularly supposed to be an Englishman, probably on account of his being Sir John Kirke's son-in-law, and also that the matter was not settled at Windsor, but at Oxford.

Then came a long delay—a whole year, during which there is nothing worthy of record. It was too late to attempt a voyage to the Bay in 1667, but during the winter Groseilliers and Radisson could console themselves with the assurance that their scheme had succeeded.

At last the adventurers had met with a tangible success. The ship engaged and fitted out for them was none other than that commanded by their Boston friend, Captain Zachary Gillam.

CHAPTER IV

1668–70

THE PRINCE VISITS THE "NONSUCH"—ARRIVAL IN THE BAY—PREVIOUS VOYAGES OF EXPLORATION—A FORT COMMENCED AT RUPERT'S RIVER—GILLAM'S RETURN—DEALING WITH THE NODWAYES—SATISFACTION OF THE COMPANY—A ROYAL CHARTER GRANTED.

EARLY in the morning of the 3rd of June 1668, without attracting undue attention from the riparian dwellers and loiterers, a small skiff shot out from Wapping Old Stairs. The boatman directed its prow towards the *Nonsuch*, a ketch of fifty tons, then lying at anchor in midstream, and soon had the satisfaction of conveying on board in safety his Highness Prince Rupert, Lord Craven, and Mr. Hayes, the distinguished patrons of an interesting expedition that day embarking for the New World. Radisson was to have accompanied the expedition, but he had met with an accident obliging him to forego the journey until the following year.

All hands being piped on deck, a salute was fired in honour of the visitors. Captain Zachary Gillam and the Sieur des Groseilliers received the Prince, and undertook to exhibit, not without a proper pride, their craft and its cargo. Subsequently a descent

was made to the captain's cabin, where a bottle of Madeira was broached, and the success of the voyage toasted by Rupert and his companions. The party then returned to Wapping, amidst a ringing cheer from captain and crew. By ten o'clock the *Nonsuch* had weighed anchor and her voyage had begun.

The passage across the Atlantic was without any incident worthy of record. The vessel was fortunate in encountering no gales or rough seas. The leisure of Groseilliers and Captain Gillam was employed chiefly in discussing the most advantageous landfall, and in drawing up plans for a settlement for fort-building and for trade with the tribes. By the 4th of August they sighted Resolution Isle, at the entrance of Hudson's Straits. They continued fearlessly on their course. During their progress the shores on either hand were occasionally visible; and once a squall compelled them to go so near land as to descry a band of natives, the like of whom for bulk and singularity of costume, Groseilliers and the captain had never clapped eyes upon. They were right in judging these to be Esquimaux.

The *Nonsuch* in the Bay.

On the seventh day of their passage amongst those narrow channels and mountains of ice which had chilled the enthusiasm and impeded the progress of several daring navigators before them, the forty-two souls on board the *Nonsuch* were rewarded with a sight of Hudson's Bay.[1]

[1] The proportions of this inland sea are such as to give it a prominent place among the geographical features of the world. One

Already, and long before the advent of the *Nonsuch*, Hudson's Bay had a history and a thrilling one.

In 1576 Sir Martin Frobisher made his first voyage for the discovery of a passage to China and Cathay by the north-west, discovering and entering a strait to which he gave his name In the following year he made a second voyage, "using all possible means to bring the natives to trade, or give him some account of themselves, but they were so wild that they only studied to destroy the English." Frobisher remained until winter approached and then returned to England. A further voyage of his in 1578–79 made no addition to the knowledge already acquired.

Six years later Captain John Davis sailed from Dartmouth, and in that and succeeding voyages reached the Arctic circle through the straits bearing his name. He related having found an open sea tending westward, which he hoped might be the passage so long sought for; but the weather proved

thousand three hundred miles in length, by six hundred miles in breadth, it extends over twelve degrees of latitude, and covers an area not less than half a million square miles. Of the five basins into which Canada is divided, that of Hudson's Bay is immeasurably the largest, the extent of country draining into it being estimated at three million square miles. To swell the mighty volume of its waters there come rivers which take their rise in the Rocky Mountains on the west, and the Labrador wilderness on the east; while southward its river roots stretch far down below the forty-ninth parellel, reaching even to the same lake source whence flows a stream into the Gulf of Mexico. A passing breath of wind may thus determine whether the ultimate destiny of the raindrop falling into some obscure little lake be the bosom of the Mexican Gulf or the chilly grasp of the Arctic ice-floe.

too tempestuous, and the season being far advanced, he likewise returned to a more hospitable clime. After this there were no more adventures in this quarter of the world until 1607, when Captain Hudson explored as far north as 80 degrees 23 minutes. On his third voyage, two years later, he proceeded a hundred leagues farther along the strait, and arriving at the Bay resolved to winter there.

Hudson was preparing for further exploration when Henry Green, a profligate youth, whom he had taken into his house and preserved from ruin by giving him a berth on board without the knowledge of the owners, conspired with one Robert Ivett, the mate, whom Captain Hudson had removed, to mutiny against Hudson's command. They turned the captain, with his young son John, a gentleman named Woodhouse, who had accompanied the expedition, together with the carpenter and five others, into a long-boat, with hardly any arms or provisions. The inhuman crew suffered all the hardships they deserved, for in a quarrel they had with the savages, Green and two of his companions were slain. Ivett, who had made several voyages with Hudson, and was the cause of all the mischief, died on the passage home. Another of the crew, Habbakuk Prickett, who wrote all the account we have of the latter part of the voyage, was a servant of Sir Dudley Diggs. Probably his master's influence had something to do with Prickett's escape from punishment.

This was the last ever seen or heard, by white men, of Henry Hudson. There is every likelihood that they drifted to the bottom of the Bay and were massacred by the savages.

Henry Hudson's fate.

In the year of Hudson's death Sir Thomas Button, at the instigation of that patron of geographical science, Prince Henry, pursued the dead hero's discoveries. He passed Hudson's Straits and, traversing the Bay, settled above two hundred leagues to the south-west from the straits, bestowing upon the adjacent region the name of New Wales. Wintering at the spot afterwards called Port Nelson, Button made an investigation of the boundaries of this large inland sea, from him named Button's Bay.

In 1611 came the expedition of Baffin; and in 1631 Captain James sailed westward to find the long-sought passage to China, spending the winter at Charlton Island, which afterwards became a depot of the Company. Captain Luke Fox went out in the same year, but his success was no greater than his predecessors in attaining the object of his search. He landed at Port Nelson and explored the country round about, but without much advantage either to himself or to his crew. When the *Nonsuch* arrived a quarter of a century had elapsed since an European had visited Hudson's Bay.

Upon much consultation, the adventurers sailed southward from Cape Smith, and on September 29 decided to cast anchor at the entrance to a river situated in 51 degrees latitude. The journey was ended; the

barque's keel grated on the gravel, a boat was lowered, and Gillam and Groseilliers went promptly ashore. The river was christened Rupert's River,[1] and it being arranged to winter here, all hands were ordered ashore to commence the construction of a fort and dwellings, upon which the name of King Charles was bestowed. Thus our little ship's-load of adventurers stood at last on the remotest shores of the New World; all but two of them strangers in a strange land.

For three days after their arrival Groseilliers and his party beheld no savages. The work of constructing the fort went on apace. It was, under Groseilliers' direction, made of logs, after the fashion of those built by the traders and Jesuits in Canada; a stockade enclosing it, as some protection from sudden attack. The experienced bushranger deemed it best not to land the cargo until communication had been made with the natives; and their attitude, friendly or otherwise, towards the strangers ascertained. No great time was spent in waiting; for on the fourth day a small band of the tribe called Nodwayes appeared, greatly astonished at the presence of white settlers in those parts. After a great deal of parleying, the Indians were propitiated by Groseilliers with some trifling gifts, and the object of their settlement made known. The Indians retired, promising to return before the winter set in with all the furs in their possession, and also to spread the tidings amongst the other tribes.

The first Fort.

[1] Known afterwards as Nemiscau by the French.

the Indian character as he did, he concocted stories about the English King and Prince Rupert; many a confiding savage that year enriched his pale-face vocabulary by adding to it "Charles" and "Rupert," epithets which denoted that superlative twain to whom the French bush-ranger had transferred his labours and his allegiance.

Groseilliers' presence of mind.

Chouart des Groseilliers in all his transactions with the natives exhibited great hardihood of speech and action; and few indeed were the occasions which caught him unawares. It happened more than once, for instance, that some of the wandering Algonquins or Hurons recognised in this smooth-tongued leader at the English fort the same French trader they had known at Montreal, and the French posts on the western lakes, and marvelled much that he who had then been loudly crying up "King Lewis and the Fleur-de-lis," should now be found surrounded by pale-faces of a different speech, known to be the allies of the terrible Iroquois. Groseilliers met their exclamations with a smile; he represented himself as profoundly dissatisfied with the manner in which the French traders treated his friends the Indians, causing them to travel so far and brave such perils to bring their furs, and giving them so little in return. "Tell all your friends to come hither," he cried, "and King Charles will give you double what King Lewis gives."

In July 1669 a gun was heard by Groseilliers and his English and native companions. With great joy

the bushranger ran from the fort to the point of land commanding the Bay, thinking to welcome back Gillam and the expected *Nonsuch*. But as the vessel came nearer he saw it was not the *Nonsuch*, and for a moment he was dismayed, uncertain whether or not to make himself known. But the colour of the flag she carried reassured him; he caused a fire to be made, that the attention of those on board might be attracted by the smoke; and was soon made aware that his signal had been seen. The sloop headed up Rupert's River, and a boat containing three men was lowered from her side. Greater still was Groseilliers' joy when he recognised amongst the approaching party in the boat his brother-in-law, Pierre Radisson. These two sturdy children of the wilderness embraced one another with great affection; Radisson related how the *Nonsuch* had arrived safely in the Thames the preceding August; he told how delighted the patrons of the enterprise had been at the favourable report which Groseilliers had despatched to their Excellencies. To demonstrate this, they had now sent out another ship containing a larger cargo, and a more varied assortment of goods for trade than the *Nonsuch* had carried; and not content with that, they were then purchasing a third and newer ship which would be sent out the succeeding spring. In the midst of his delivery of welcome tidings, Radisson introduced Captain Stannard of the *Eagle*, whose instructions were that he should return as quickly as his

cargo was unshipped, leaving the brothers-in-law to winter in that region. This they were not loath to do.

Satisfaction of the Adventurers.

Radisson had not exaggerated the satisfaction of the company of London merchants at hearing the results of their first venture. They took counsel together, and considering the importance of securing a charter of monopoly from the King to be paramount, Prince Rupert was persuaded to use his good offices to this end.

Charles was doubtless relieved to hear that his cousin Rupert desired no greater favour. He expressed himself ready to grant such a patent, provided the Lord Chancellor approved. A charter was accordingly drawn up forthwith at the instance of the Prince, in the usual form of such charters; but the winter of 1669–70 elapsed without its having received the royal assent. Indeed it was not until the second day of May that Prince Rupert, presenting himself at Whitehall, received from the King's own hands one of the most celebrated instruments which ever passed from monarch to subject, and which, though almost incessantly in dispute, was perpetuated in full force throughout two centuries.[1]

This document was granted to Prince Rupert and seventeen nobles and gentlemen, comprising the Duke of Albemarle,[2] Earls Craven and Arlington, Lord

[1] See Appendix.

[2] The son of Charles's old friend, General George Monk, and known to history as the brave restorer of the King. Created Duke of Albemarle; the father died in the year the charter was granted.

Ashley,[1] Sir John Robinson, Sir Robert Vyner, Sir Peter Colleton, Sir Edward Hungerford, Sir Paul Neele, Sir John Griffith, Sir Philip Carteret, Knights and Baronets; James Hayes, John Kirke, Francis Wellington, William Prettyman, John Fenn, Esquires, and John Portman, "Citizen and Goldsmith," incorporated into a company, with the exclusive right to establish settlements and carry on trade at Hudson's Bay. The charter recites that those adventurers having, at their own great cost, undertaken an expedition to Hudson's Bay in order to discover a new passage into the South Sea, and to find a trade for furs, minerals, and other commodities, and having made such discoveries as encouraged them to proceed in their design, his Majesty granted to them and their heirs, under the name of "The Governor and Company of Merchants-Adventurers trading into Hudson's Bay," the power of holding and alienating lands, and the sole right of trade in Hudson's Strait, and with the territories upon the coasts of the same.

The Charter.

They were authorised to get out ships of war, to erect forts, make reprisals, and send home all English subjects entering the Bay without their license, and

[1] Lord Ashley, the ancestor of the present Earl of Shaftesbury, and one of the ruling spirits of the reign of Charles II., will also be remembered as the Achitophel of Dryden.

"A man so various that he seemed to be
Not one; but all mankind's epitome."

Arlington, another of the Honourable Adventurers, was also a member of the celebrated Cabal. Portman was the founder of the present Portman family.

to declare war and make peace with any prince or people not Christian.

The territory described as Rupert's Land consisted of the whole region whose waters flowed into Hudson's Bay. It was a vast tract—how vast they knew not—for the dimensions of that part of the continent had not yet been even approximately ascertained. For all the adventurers knew the Pacific Ocean was not distant more than two hundred miles west of the Bay.

In the same merry month of May the *Prince Rupert* set sail from Gravesend, conveying a new cargo, a new crew, and a newly appointed overseer of trade, to the Company's distant dominions.

CHAPTER V

1668–1670

Danger apprehended to French Dominion—Intendant Talon—Fur-Trade extended Westward—News of the English Expedition reaches Quebec—Sovereign rights in question—English Priority established.

Although neither the Governor, the Fur Company, nor the officials of the Most Christian King at Quebec, had responded favourably to the proposals of Groseilliers, yet they were not long in perceiving that a radical change in their trade policy was desirable. Representations were made to M. Colbert and the French Court. It was even urged that France's North American dominions were in danger, unless a more positive and aggressive course were pursued with regard to extension. These representations, together with the knowledge that the Dutch on the south side of the St. Lawrence and in the valley of the Hudson had unexpectedly acknowledged allegiance to the King of England, determined Lewis to evince a greater interest in Canadian affairs than he had done hitherto.

French activity.

Mezy was recalled, soon afterwards to die; and

Daniel de Remin, Seigneur de Courcelles, was despatched as Provincial Governor. A new office was created, that of Intendant of Justice, Police, and Finance; and Jean Talon—a man of ability, experience, and energy—was made the first Intendant. Immediately upon his arrival, he took steps to confirm the sovereignty of his master over the vast realms in the West; and to set up the royal standard in the region of the Great Lakes.

In 1668 Talon returned to France, taking with him one of those hardy bushrangers (*coureurs de bois*) who passed nearly the whole of their lives in the interior and in the company of the Hurons. This man seems to have cut a very picturesque figure. He had been scalped, and bore about his person many grim mutilations and disfigurements, to bear witness to his adventures amongst unfriendly tribes. He accompanied Talon in the capacity of servant or bodyguard, and appears to have had little difficulty in making himself an object of infinite interest to the lackeys and concierges of Paris. On the Intendant's return to Canada, this daring personage, Peray by name, is alluded to as Talon's most trusted adviser with regard to the western country and the tribes inhabiting it. In one of the Intendant's letters, dated February 24th, 1669, he writes that Peray had "penetrated among the western nations farther than any Frenchman; and had seen the copper mine on Lake Huron. This man offers to go to that mine and explore either by sea,

or by the lake and river—such communication being supposed to exist between Canada and the South Sea—or to the Hudson's Bay."

French activity had never been so great in the new world as in the years between Groseilliers' departure from Quebec and the period when the English fur-traders first came in contact with the French on the shores of Hudson's Bay, thirteen years later.

In the summer of 1669, the active and intelligent Louis Joliet, with an outfit of 4000 livres, supplied him by the Intendant, penetrated into an unknown region and exhibited the white standard of France before the eyes of the astonished natives.

This also was the period which witnessed the exploits of La Salle, and of Saint Lusson. Trade followed quickly on their heels. In March 1670, five weeks before the charter was granted to the Great Company, a party of Jesuits arriving at Sault Ste. Marie found twenty-five Frenchmen trading there with the Indians. These traders reported that a most lucrative traffic had sprung up in that locality. Coincident with the tidings they thus conveyed to Talon, the Intendant learnt from some Algonquins who had come to Quebec to trade, that two European vessels had been seen in Hudson's Bay.

"After reflecting," he wrote to Colbert, "on all the nations that might have penetrated as far north as that, I can only fall back on the English, who, under the conduct of one named Groseilliers, in former times

an inhabitant of Canada, might possibly have attempted that navigation, of itself not much known and not less dangerous. I design to send by land some men of resolution to invite the Kilistinons,[1] who are in great numbers in the vicinity of that Bay, to come down to see us as the Ottawas do, in order that we may have the first handling of what the savages bring us, who, acting as retail dealers between ourselves and those natives (*i.e.* the Kilistinons), make us pay for this roundabout way of three or four hundred leagues."

Colbert and the Company.

The rivalry of French and English north of the St. Lawrence had begun. With that rivalry began also from this moment that long series of disputes concerning the sovereignty of the whole northern territories, which has endured down to our own generation.

Few historical themes have ever been argued at greater length or more minutely than this — the priority of discovery, occupation, and active assumption of sovereignty over those lands surrounding Hudson's Bay, which for two centuries were to be held and ruled by the Hudson's Bay Company. The wisest jurists, the shrewdest intellects, the most painstaking students were destined to employ themselves during two centuries in seeking to establish by historical evidence, by tradition and by deduction, the "rights" of the English or of the French to those regions.

A much vexed controversy.

[1] Kristineaux, Crees.

A great deal of importance has been attached to the fact that in 1627 a charter had been granted by Lewis XIII. to a number of adventurers sent to discover new lands to the north of the River of St. Lawrence. The clause of the charter reads as follows: —"Le fort et habitation de Quebec, avec tout le pays de la Nouvelle France dite Canada, tant le long des Cotes depuis la Floride que les prédecesseurs Rois de Sa Majesté ont fait habiter en rangéant les Cotes de la Mer jusqu'au Cercle Arctique pour latitude, et de longitude depuis l'Ile de Terreneuve tirant a l'ouest au Grand Lac dit la Mer douce et au délà que de dans les terres, et le long des Rivieres qui y passant et se déchargent dans le fleuve dit St. Laurent, ou autrement la grande Riviere du Canada, et dans tous les autres fleuves qui se portent a la mer." But most writers have omitted to verify the fact that in this charter to the French Company, the only portions of land granted to the French Company are the lands or portions of lands which had already been occupied by the Kings of France, and the object of the charter was simply to give them an exclusive right of trade therein. Thus it was clearly indicated that the charter did not go further than the land occupied by the predecessors of Lewis XIV.

New France, it has been said, was then understood to include "the whole region of Hudson's Bay, as the maps and histories of the time, English and French, abundantly prove." This is a broad assertion,

which is not supported by the early discoverers nor by the historians of that time. Charlevoix in his history described New France as being an exceedingly limited territory. L'Escarbot's description shows that at that time the whole territory known as New France extended but a few miles on each side of the St. Lawrence. Charlevoix says mournfully at that time that the giving up of this territory did not amount to much, as New France was circumscribed by very narrow limits on either side of the St. Lawrence.

When an examination is made into the facts of the voyages and expeditions alleged to have been undertaken by the French prior to 1672, it is difficult to arrive at any but a certain conclusion—that the French claims had no foundation in fact.

It was then asserted, and long afterwards repeated, that Jean Bourdon, the Attorney-General in 1656, explored the entire coast of Labrador and entered Hudson's Bay. For this assertion one is unable to find any historical support; certainly no record of any kind exists of such a voyage. There is a record in 1655, it is true, that Sieur Bourdon, then Attorney-General, was authorised to make a discovery of *le Mer du Nord;* and in order to comply with that *arrêt* of the Sovereign Council at Quebec, he actually made an attempt at such discovery. Bourdon left Quebec on May 2nd, 1657, and an entry in the records proves his return on August 11th of the same year. It is mani-

festly impossible that such a voyage could have been accomplished between these dates. But a reference to this business in the Jesuit Relations of the succeeding year is sufficiently convincing.[1]

It is there recorded that on the "11th of August, there appeared the barque of M. Bourdon, which having descended the Grand River on the north side, sailed as far as the 55th degree, where it encountered a great bank of ice, which caused it to return, having lost two Hurons that it had taken as guides. The Esquimaux savages of the north massacred them and wounded a Frenchman with three arrows and one cut with a knife."

Another statement employed to strengthen the French claim to sovereignty was, that Father Dablon and Sieur de Valiere were ordered in 1661 to proceed to the country about Hudson's Bay, and that they accordingly went thither. All accounts available to

[1] Jean Bourdon was of the Province of Quebec; he was well known to the Jesuits and trusted by them. He subsequently accompanied Father Jacques on an embassy to Governor Dongan, the Governor of the Province of New York.

In Shea's *Charlevoix*, Vol. III. pp. 39, 40, it is stated that Père Dablon attempted to penetrate to the northern ocean by ascending the Saguenay. Early in June, two months after they set out, they found themselves at the head of the Nekauba river, 300 miles from Lake St. John. Warned of the approach of the Iroquois, they dared not proceed farther. In the New York Historical Documents (p. 97) there is an account of Dablon from the time of his arrival in Canada in 1655. He was immediately sent missonary to Onondaga, where he continued with a brief interval until 1658. In 1661 he set out overland for Hudson's Bay, but succeeded only in reaching the head waters of the Nekauba, 300 miles from Lac St. Jean.

the historian agree that the worthy father never reached the Bay.

Another assertion equally long-lived and equally ill-founded, was to the effect that one Sieur La Couture, with five men, proceeded overland to the Bay, and there took possession of it in the King's name. There is no account of this voyage in *Charlevoix*, or in the "Relations des Jesuites," or in the memoir furnished by M. de Callieres to the Marquis de Denonville. This memoir, which was penned in 1685, or twenty-one years after the time of which it treated, set forth that La Couture made the journey for purposes of discovery. Under the circumstances, particularly owing to the strong necessity under which the French were placed to find some shadow of right for their pretensions, M. de Callieres' memoir has been declared untrustworthy by competent authorities.

La Couture's mythical voyage.

In 1663, Sieur Duquet, the King's Attorney for Quebec, and Jean L'Anglois, a Canadian colonist, are said to have gone to Hudson's Bay by order of Sieur D'Argenson, and to have renewed possession by setting up the King's arms there a second time. Such an order could hardly have been given by D'Argenson, because he had left Canada on September 16th, 1671, two years before this pretended order was given to Sieur Duquet.

It has been attempted to explain the silence of the "Relations of the Jesuits" concerning Bourdon's

voyage, by asserting that they were naturally anxious that members of their own society should be the pioneers in discovery, and that therefore many important discoveries were never brought to light in their Relations because they were not made by Jesuits. It is enough to say that such an argument cannot apply to the voyage of Dablon. He was a Jesuit, a man in whom the interests of the society were centred, and if a voyage had been made by him, no doubt a great deal of prominence would have been given to it. On the contrary, in the third volume of the "Jesuit Relations," 1662, we find this Jesuit, Father Dablon, describing an unsuccessful voyage that he made. There can be no doubt that he attempted a voyage. A portion of this relation is written by himself, and he calls it, "Journal du Premier Voyage Fait Vers la Mer du Nord." The first portion of it is most important and conclusive, as showing that De Callieres, in his memoir to M. De Seignely, twenty-one years afterwards, must have been speaking from hearsay, and without any authentic documents on which to base his assertions. Dablon says that the highest point which he did reach was Nekauba, a hundred leagues from Tadoussac, and that subsequently he returned; and this is from a report of this journey written by himself. Some have attempted to raise a doubt as to the identity of the Dablon in De Callieres' memoir, with the Dablon of the "Relations des Jesuites." But at the end of one of the volumes

French falsehoods and fallacies.

is a complete list of all the Jesuits, pioneers both of the faith and in the way of discovery, and there is only one Dablon mentioned. Another inaccuracy of this memoir is as to the trip of Duquet, under an order said to have been given by Sieur D'Argenson. There can be no doubt that at the time this pretended order was given, D'Argenson had left Canada.

On the whole it may be as well for the reader to dismiss the French pretensions. They are no longer of interest, save to the hair-splitting student of the country's annals; but in their day they gave rise to a wilderness of controversy, through which we in the twentieth century may yet grope vainly for the light. For all practical purposes the question of priority was settled for ever by the Ontario Boundary Commission of 1884. Let us turn rather to behold to what account the Honourable Adventurers converted their new property.

CHAPTER VI

1671

First Public Sale at Garraway's—Contemporary Prices of Fur—The Poet Dryden—Meetings of the Company—Curiosity of the Town—Aborigines on View.

On the seventeenth day of November 1671, the wits, beaux, and well-to-do merchants who were wont to assemble at Garraway's coffee-house, London, were surprised by a placard making the following announcement:—"On the fifth of December, ensuing, There Will Be Sold, in the Greate Hall of this Place, 3000 weight of Beaver Skins,[1] comprised in thirty lotts, belonging to the Honourable, the Governour and Company of Merchants-Adventurers Trading into Hudson's Bay."

Such was the notice of the first official sale of the Company. Up to this date, the peltries brought back

[1] The beaver, amphibious and intelligent, had for centuries a considerable place in commerce: and also a celebrity of its own as the familiar synonym for the common covering of a man's head, and here the animal becomes historic. By royal proclamation in 1638, Charles I. of England prohibited the use of any material in the manufacture of hats "except beaver stuff or beaver wool." This proclamation was the death-warrant of beavers innumerable, sacrificed to the demands of the trade

in their ships had been disposed of by private treaty, an arrangement entrusted chiefly to Mr. John Portman and Mr. William Prettyman, both of whom appear to have had considerable familiarity with the European fur-trade. The immediate occasion of this sale is a trivial matter. The causes lying behind it are of interest.

Among the numerous houses which cured and dealt in furs at this period, both in London and Bristol, there were none whose business seems to have been comparable, either in quantity or quality, to that of the great establishments which flourished in Leipsic and Amsterdam, Paris and Vienna. Indeed, it was a reproach continually levelled at the English fur-dressers that such furs as passed through their hands were vastly inferior to the foreign product; and it is certain that it was the practice of the nobles and wealthier classes, as well as the municipal and judicial dignitaries, for whose costume fur was prescribed by use and tradition, to resort not to any English establishment, but to one of the cities above-mentioned, when desirous of replenishing this department of their wardrobe. Hitherto, then, the Company had had but little opportunity of extending its trade, and but little ground to show why an intending purchaser should patronise its wares. But the superiority both in the number and quality of the skins which now began to arrive seems to have encouraged the directors to make a new bid for public custom; and as the purchasing

public showed no disposition to visit their warehouses they determined to take their goods to the public.

Albeit this sale of the Company, the first, as it subsequently proved, of a series of great transactions which during the past two centuries have made London the centre of the world's fur-trade, did not take place until the twenty-fourth of January. It excited the greatest interest. Garraway's was crowded by distinguished men, and both the Prince Rupert and the Duke of York, besides Dryden, the poet, were among the spectators. There are some lines attributed to the latter under date of 1672, which may possibly have been improvised on this occasion:

First sale well attended.

> "Friend, once 'twas Fame that led thee forth
> To brave the Tropick Heat, the Frozen North,
> Late it was Gold, then Beauty was the Spur;
> But now our Gallants venture but for Fur."

A number of purchases seem to have been made by private parties; but the bulk of the undressed beaver-skins probably went to fur merchants, and there is good reason to believe that the majority found their way into the hands of Portman and Prettyman. Beaver one finds on this occasion fetched from thirty-five to fifty-five shillings—a high figure, which for a long time was maintained. But the Company showed considerable sagacity by not parting with its entire stock of furs at once. Only the beaver-skins were disposed of at this sale; the

peltries of moose, marten, bear, and otter were reserved for a separate and subsequent auction.

Prior to its incorporation, and for a year afterwards, the Company does not seem to have pursued any formal course with regard to its meetings. At first, they met at the Tower, at the Mint, or at Prince Rupert's house in Spring Garden. Once or twice they met at Garraway's. But at a conclave held on November 7th, 1671, it was resolved that a definite procedure should be established with regard both to the time and place of meeting, and to the keeping of the minutes and accounts. These latter, it was ordered, were forthwith to be rendered weekly to the General Court, so that the Adventurers might be conversant with all sales, orders, and commissions included in the Company's dealings. Employees' accounts were also to be posted up; and the same regulation was applied to the lists of goods received for the two ships then lying in the Thames. It was further decreed that the weekly meetings should take place at Mr. John Horth's, "The Excise Office," in Broad Street.[1]

Meeting at John Horth's.

Soon afterwards, a "General Court" of the Adventurers was held, at which the Prince, Lord Ashley, Sir John Robinson, Sir Peter Colleton, Sir Robert Viner, Mr. Kirke, and Mr. Portman were in attendance. We catch a thoroughly typical glimpse of Prince

[1] This building was afterwards occupied by the South Sea Company, and was long known as Old South Sea House. It was burned down in 1826.

Rupert at this meeting; sober business was not at all to his taste, and at a very early stage in the proceedings he feigned indisposition, and took his departure. A hint, however, may possibly have been given to him to do so, for no sooner was the door closed behind him, than his friend Lord Ashley introduced the very delicate topic which was entered into by all those present. It concerned nothing less than Prince Rupert's profits, which up to this time seem to have been very vaguely defined.

Lord Ashley spoke for the Prince and demanded some definite payment besides a share in the enterprise; but there is no record of an agreement or of any exact sum, nor is there any basis for the contemporary conjecture that his share was ten thousand pounds. The charter of monopoly was an important one, and the King certainly not the man to fail in appreciating its value; but how much he did out of goodwill to his kinsman, and how much out of consideration for his own profit, will never be known. A perusal of the quantity of manuscript matter which exists relating to this arrangement would lead to the conclusion that Charles sold the charter out of hand. And indeed one pamphleteer, intent on defaming the Company in 1766, even goes so far as to profess actual knowledge of the sum paid to his Majesty by the Adventurers. But upon a consideration of all the speculations advanced, I have come to the conclusion that it is highly improbable that the King received any

immediate pecuniary advantage whatever on account of the charter. There is no shadow of evidence to support the charge; and there is at least some presumptive evidence against it. Charters were both commonly and cheaply given in those days. Even where consideration was given, the amount was insignificant. In 1668, for example, Charles transferred the province of Bombay, which had come to the British Crown as portion of the dower of Catherine of Braganza, to the East India Company for an annual rent of no more than £10. In this case, then, the data, such as they are, strongly favour the belief that he granted the charter simply in quittance of a claim and at the urgent instance of his cousin; while, as an additional motive, it was probably also pressed upon him that a charter boasting the royal signature would be a virtual assertion of his dominion over territory which was always somewhat in dispute.

Prince Rupert himself in any case was paid a lump sum by the Adventurers, but the amount will probably never be known.

The early meetings of the Company seem to have been largely occupied in considering the question of cargoes. This was, no doubt, a very important business. The Company appear to have had two precedents which, in part, they naturally adopted, those of the Dutch (or West India Company) and the French Company. The East India Company's practice could have afforded them little assistance. They also struck

out a line for themselves, and in their selection of goods for the purposes of barter they were greatly guided by the advice of Radisson, who had a very sound conception of the Indian character. From the first the Company rejected the practice of seeking to exchange glass beads and gilded kickshaws for furs. Not that they found it inexpedient to include these trifles in their cargoes: for we read in one of the news-letters of 1671, speaking of the doings at Garraway's:—

"Hither came Mr. Portman, to whom, report says, is entrusted the purchase of beads and ribbons for the American savages by the new Adventurers, and who is charged with being in readiness to bargain for sackfuls of child's trinkets as well as many outlandish things, which are proper for barter. He takes the rallying in great good-humour."

Long before the Company was thought of, the manufacture of beads and wampum for the New England trade had been going on in London. But beads and jewellery, it was argued, were better suited for the African and East Indian trade. It was Radisson who pointed out with great propriety that the northern tribes would become most useful to the Company if they were provided with weapons for killing or ensnaring the game, as well as with the knives, hatchets, and kettles, which were indispensable for dressing it, and for preparing pemmican. And his advice was taken on this, as on most other points. Thus for the *Prince Rupert* and

Solid character of the merchandise.

the *Imploy*, which were to sail in the following spring, the following cargo was prescribed by Radisson and Captain Gillam :—

500 fowling-pieces, and powder and shot in proportion.
500 brass kettles, 2 to 16 gallons apiece.
30 gross of knives.
2000 hatchets.

But it is curious to note how this list of exports was continually added to. For instance, one of the Company on one occasion rose at the weekly meeting and stated that he had been told by an experienced Indian trader that scarlet cloth was very highly esteemed among the Indians.

"I hear," said he, "that an Indian will barter anything he possesses for a couple of yards of scarlet cloth and a few dyed feathers."

Whereupon, the chairman turned to the original Adventurer in the region controlled by the Company.

"What does Mr. Radisson say to this?"

"I think," said Mr. Radisson, "that the Honourable Adventurer does not understand the Indian trade as well as I do. He forgets that Indians are of many races; and that what will suit the case and attract the cupidity of an Indian far to the south, will have little effect on the northern tribes. An Iroquois would think more of a brass nail than of twenty yards of scarlet cloth. In the north, where we have

built a factory, the Indians are more peaceful; but they do not care much for kickshaws and coloured rags. They, too, esteem powder and shot and the means of discharging them. But they are just as fond, particularly Eskimaux, of knives and kettles and hatchets."

On a subsequent occasion, a third as many again of these implements were taken as cargo.

In the meantime, it was not to be supposed that the rumours of the great value put upon petty merchandise by the hyperborean savages, could fail to excite the cupidity of London merchants and dealers in these things. The ships that sailed in the spring of 1671 were besieged by peddlers and small dealers, who were prepared to adventure their property in the wilds. Not only the ships, but the houses selected for the Company's meetings were beset with eager throngs, praying the adventurers, collectively and individually, to act as middlemen for their trumpery merchandise.

Ships besieged by peddlers.

Not only did the ships and the place of meeting suffer siege, but as many as thirty persons shipped out to Hudson's Bay in the first two voyages after the granting of the charter, while twenty-one of them returned in the next two vessels, fully determined, apparently, to repeat a journey which had proved so lucrative.

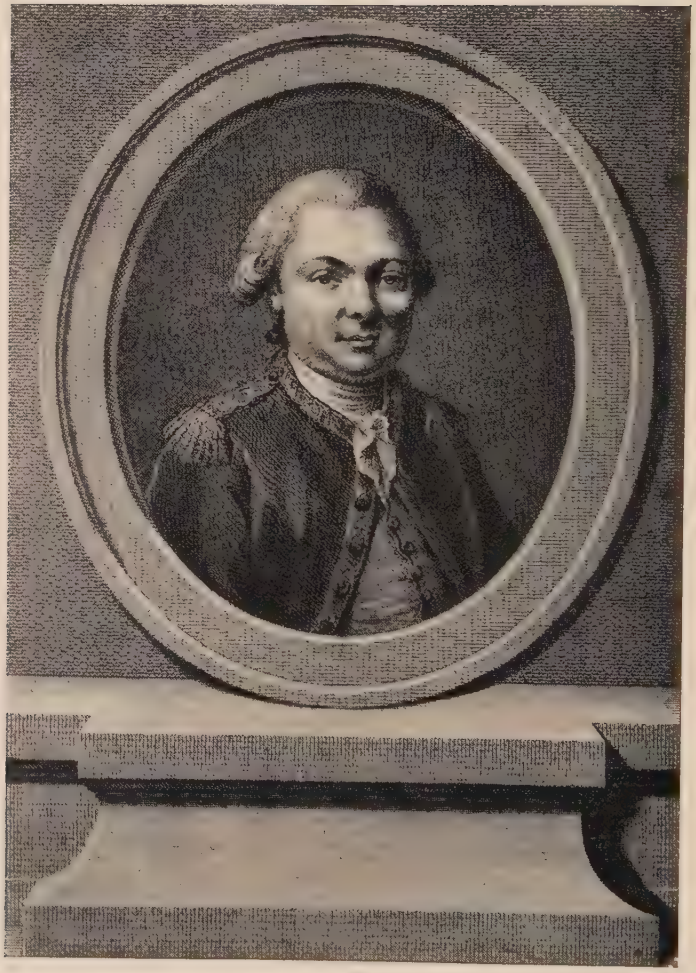
To abate this nuisance, it was enacted that no persons would "hereafter be employed to stay in the

country or otherwise but by consent of the Committee, nor any goods be put aboard the ships but with their knowledge and consent, to the end that the ships be not hereafter pestered as they were the last voyage."

This enactment may have had its rise in the dishonesty of these self-appointed adventurers. On several occasions on unshipping the cargo, boxes and barrels containing valuable furs would be found missing, or their loss would coincide with the disappearance of a reprobate who had joined the ship without a character.

Thus we read in the minutes that at one meeting it was ordered that inquiry be made as to sixty beaver skins, "very good and large, packed up with the others, in one of the casks, which were not found." One Jeremiah Walker, a second mate and supercargo, was required to state which cask they were taken in, and his cross-examination reveals the loose and unbusiness-like methods then in vogue.

Nothing could be more entertaining than the character of these meetings, as compared with a modern board-meeting of a joint-stock enterprise. A great air of mystery was kept up. The novelty of the undertaking was so great as to imbue the committee with a high sense of the importance and interest of their weekly conclaves. The length of the speeches bears witness to this spirit. A member had been known to speak for a whole hour on the edifying



AMIRAL LA PÉROUSE

From an engraving after a miniature by ALEXANDER TARDIEU

theme as to whether the furs should be placed in barrels or boxes.

Vague rumours of these secret proceedings permeated the town. They became a standing topic at the places where men foregathered. To the popular imagination, the North was a land of fable. The denizens of those countries were invested with strange attributes and clothed in weird and wonderful garments. The Hudson's Bay Company dealt with picturesque monarchs and a fierce, proud, and noble people, whose ordinary attire was the furs of sable, of ermine, of fox, and of otter; who made treaties and exacted tributes after the fashion of the ceremonial East. Petty chiefs and sachems were described as kings and emperors; the wretched squaws of a redskin leader as queens. It was, perhaps, only natural for a generation which banqueted its imagination on the seductive fable of a North-west Passage to confuse the Red Indians of North America with the inhabitants of the East; a very long period was to pass away before the masses were able to distinguish between the tawny-skinned Indian of the North American continent and the swarthy servants of the East India Company. Nor were the masses alone sinners in this respect. The Indians of Dryden, of Congreve, of Steele, and even of writers so late as Goldsmith no more resembled the real Red-men than the bison of the western prairies was akin to the buffalo of the Himalayas.

For such reasons as these, the Adventurers kept

their ways and their superior knowledge with superior discretion to themselves.

Capital of the Company.

It was never known in the seventeenth century what actually constituted the original capital of the Adventurers. So small was it that when, in the course of the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry in 1749, nearly eighty years after the Company had received its charter, the figures were divulged, the pettiness of the sum occasioned universal surprise. Each Adventurer was apparently required to pay £300 sterling; and the gross sum was divided into thirty-four equal shares. Besides Prince Rupert's "sundry charges" (the euphemism employed to describe the sum paid him for his interest in obtaining the charter), his Highness was offered a share amounting to one equal share. "He having graciously signified his acceptance thereof," says the secretary in the minute-book, "credit given him for three hundred pounds." The capital thus stood at £10,500.

CHAPTER VII

1671–1673

MISSION OF THE PÈRE ALBANEL — APPREHENSION AT FORT CHARLES — BAILEY'S DISTRUST OF RADISSON — EXPEDITION TO MOOSE RIVER — GROSEILLIERS AND THE SAVAGES — THE BUSHRANGERS LEAVE THE COMPANY'S SERVICE — ARRIVAL OF GOVERNOR LYDDAL.

WHILE the Honourable Company of Adventurers was holding its meetings in the Broad Street Excise Office, and gravely discussing its huge profits and its motley wares, an event was happening some thousands of miles away which was to decide the fate, for some years at least, of the two picturesque figures to whom the inception of the whole enterprise was due.

In August 1671, M. Talon, the Intendant of New France, sent for a certain Father Albanel and a young friend of his, the Sieur de St. Simon, and after embracing them sent both forth on a perilous mission to the North. They were directed to "penetrate as far as the *Mer du Nord;* to draw up a memoir of all they would discover, drive a trade in fur with the Indians, and especially reconnoitre whether there be any means of wintering ships in that quarter." Such

were the injunctions bestowed upon these hardy spirits on the eve of their errand. To recur to a theme already touched upon, if the French Government of the day had previously caused visits to be made to Hudson's Bay in the manner described several years later, all this knowledge would have been already acquired; and there would have been no necessity to despatch either priest or layman thither to make that discovery anew.

In the "Jesuit Relations" for 1672 is found Father Albanel's own narration of his journey:—

Father Albanel's journey.

"Hitherto this voyage had been considered impossible for Frenchmen, who, after having undertaken it three times and not having been able to surmount the obstacles, had seen themselves to abandon it in despair of success. What appears as impossible is found not to be so when it pleases God. The conduct of it was reserved to me after eighteen years' prosecution that I had made, and I have very excellent proofs that God reserved the execution of it for me, after the singular favour of a sudden and marvellous, not to say miraculous, recovery that I received as soon as I devoted myself to this mission at the solicitation of my Superior; and in fact I have not been deceived in my expectation: I have opened the road, in company with two Frenchmen and six savages." Thus it is made apparent that so far as the Jesuits, pioneers of this country, were concerned, no knowledge of any

of their compatriots having penetrated to Hudson's Bay had ever reached them. The letter that M. Talon was writing to his royal master is proof that he, too, was unaware of any prior discovery. No doubt remains that the worthy priest and the young chevalier, his servant, were the first party travelling overland from Quebec to penetrate into those regions and to behold that vast expanse of water.

The little band of English at Fort Charles, under Charles Bailey, who had been sent out as Governor of Rupert's Land by the Company, were soon made aware of the proximity of the French, and no one seems to have been more affected by the news than Radisson and Groseilliers. The two brothers-in-law indulged in many anxious surmises. Radisson offered to go and find out who the intruders were, but the Governor by no means favoured the idea. In those days, when national rivalries and prejudices were so intense, and especially so among the English middle classes, Bailey seems to have felt a great deal of distrust with regard to the two Frenchmen; and he early made up his mind to let them know his opinion and feel his authority. The two parties were continually at loggerheads; the Frenchmen naturally resenting the Governor's unjust suspicions, and the Governor retorting by a ponderous irony and a surly and persistent surveillance of their speech and movements.

In the following year, 1673, the occupants of the Company's post, at Rupert's River, were made aware

of the neighbourhood of their trade rivals in no pleasant manner. The Indians of the country round about began to show signs of disaffection. On being questioned, some of the more friendly ones were induced to betray the cause. They had been informed by the Frenchmen, who, in that and the previous years had reached the shores of the Bay, distant some twenty or thirty leagues, that the English were not to be trusted, that their firearms were bewitched, that their religion was that of the evil one. Peaceably inclined, the Nodwayes, who were the principal inhabitants of that region, fell an easy prey to the proselytism of the indomitable Jesuits. Many of their younger braves had, before the arrival of Dablon in their midst, journeyed to Quebec and taken part in the mission services there, and at Montreal. They were, moreover, susceptible to the racial and commercial antagonisms of their teachers; and late in 1673 Governor Bailey was informed that they contemplated an attack on the fort.

Rivals on the scene.

On this, the Company's servants began the task of strengthening their frail defences. The Governor alleged that he had received instructions from England to despatch Groseilliers to the other side of the Bay, called the "West Main." Radisson sought to accompany his kinsman, and was met with a peremptory refusal. This action by no means increased the amity between him and his rather stupid and choleric superior. Nevertheless the winter passed without any

open exhibition of hostility between the two men; and it seemed likely that no difficulties would arise while the cold weather continued. The ground was, however, still covered with snow when several Indians appeared and asked to be allowed to take up their abode at the east end of the fort, that they might be ready for trade in the spring. Bailey, with his customary sagacity in such matters, suspected some treachery in this; but on the active expostulations of Radisson the simple request was granted, and the Indians immediately proceeded to erect their wigwams. On the 25th of March, when the thaw commenced, six savages, announcing themselves as ambassadors from Kas-kidi-dah, the chief of the tribe (referred to by Bailey's secretary as "King Cusciddidah"), came to herald the approach of that potentate. It so chanced that both the Governor and Radisson were absent, having gone out to reconnoitre and to obtain an addition to their now slender stock of meat. In all these little expeditions the Governor and Radisson were inseparable. The former swore privately he could never bring himself to trust the fort in the hands of a Frenchman; and, although there was no reason whatever to apprehend ill consequences, the Governor constantly acted as if any such show of confidence on his part would emphatically jeopardise the interests of the Company.

Governor Bailey's distrust.

King Kas-kidi-dah arrived on the following day. "His Majestie brought a retinue with him," records

Thomas Gorst, the Governor's secretary, "but very little beaver, the Indians having already sent their best to Canada."

In the absence of the Governor, the occupants of the fort regarded Captain Cole as their superior. Cole did not place much confidence in the pacific mien of the savages surrounding the fort, and a guard was kept up night and day. Under cover of darkness two sailors were despatched to find the Governor; but scarcely had they departed on their quest than Kas-kidi-dah proposed that two of his Indians should go on the same errand. The acting commandant of the fort could not well decline this offer, and on the 31st of March the second party returned, bringing with them the Governor. To the surprise of all Radisson did not accompany him. No explanation was offered; but the next day the rumour ran that they had quarrelled in the wilderness, that from words they came to blows, and that finally Radisson had attempted to shoot the Governor.

Filled with a natural alarm, Groseilliers made several attempts to obtain from Bailey the true story of the affair, but the Governor declined to affirm or confirm anything, saying that he had no doubt Groseilliers knew quite as much of the matter as himself. Groseilliers' anxiety, however, was considerably lessened when at a formal conference with the Indian king, held at the latter's wigwams near the fort, he learnt that the French had made a settlement not above eight

days' journey from Rupert's River. Hither, in effect, Radisson had repaired; and afterwards from thence made his way back to Quebec. Of his subsequent adventures mention will be made later in the narrative.

Kas-kidi-dah openly demanded the English protection. He declared his apprehension of being attacked by other Indians, whom the French had animated against the English and all who dealt with them. He even gave a description of the fort the French had erected on the banks of Moose River, and the contents of its storehouse. Already the French were resorting to many artifices to hinder the natives from trading with the heretic pale-faces; they gave higher value for the furs brought them, and lost no opportunity of instilling into the minds of the Indians a far from flattering opinion of their trade rivals, the English.

First French rivalry.

One hearer received these tidings with complete equanimity. That which surprised and confounded his companions, filled the bosom of Chouart des Groseilliers with a secret joy. The Governor's high-handed deportment had oppressed, if it had not angered him; and he had, together with his brother-in-law, begun to suspect that this policy of enmity was dictated by a desire to rid himself and the Company of them both. But in the proximity of his compatriots, the French, he found a weapon of great utility in his relations with the Governor, his superior officer.

On the third of April a council was held, to debate

upon the advisability of the Company's agents removing from Rupert's to Moose River, thus to prevent their traffic being intercepted by the French. The Governor adopted a tone of great cordiality towards Groseilliers, and listened with deference to his advice. Groseilliers boldly counselled giving up the present fort and establishing themselves close to the French. Bailey, much to Captain Cole's astonishment, instantly approved of the plan. In vain did Cole protest against the course as dangerous; the Governor professed his confidence in Groseilliers' wisdom, and ordered the sloop to be got ready for the journey.

In the meantime the Indians in the neighbourhood of Fort Charles continued building their wigwams. They raised their wauscohegein or fort so near the English that the palisades joined. As their numbers increased, Groseilliers advised putting off their own expedition until the savages were gone hunting, so that Fort Charles and those left in charge might not be surprised in their absence. On the 20th of May, seven canoes containing more subjects of Kas-kidi-dah arrived, bringing the news to the English that few, if any, Upland Indians might be expected to visit them that season, the French having persuaded them to journey with their goods to Canada instead. Indeed, said they, the tribes had already left, so that even if the English expedition were made, it would be fruitless.

At this depressing intelligence Bailey again sought Groseilliers' advice, and this being still in favour of

advancing to Moose River, it was adopted. Before the departure, on the 27th of May, a band of about fifty men, women, and children appeared, anxious to trade; but instead of furs they offered wampum, feathers, and a few small canoes, for none of which merchandise the Company's agents had need. They were of the nation called Pishapocanoes, a tribe allied to the Esquimaux, and like them, a "poor, beggarly people; by which," adds one of the party, "we may perceive the French ran away with the best of the trade."

Everything being now in readiness, the expedition started, but without Bailey. The Governor, at the last moment, decided to remain behind at Fort Charles and await their return.

First visit to Moose River.

The voyage across the Bay was made in safety, and on the very day of landing at the mouth of Moose River, a band of Tabiti Indians were encountered, from whom they obtained about two hundred pelts. The chief of this band denied that the French had bribed them or the other Indians not to trade with the English. They declared that as yet their intercourse had been almost entirely with the Jesuits, one of whom was Father Albanel, who had merely urged them to live on terms of friendship with the nations in league with the French. The chief blamed the English for trading with such pitiful tribes as Kas-kidi-dah's and the Pishapocanoes, advising them instead to settle at Moose River, where, he asserted, the Upland Indians would come and trade with them.

One curious incident occurred in the course of this parley. The Tabiti chief, who had been for some time eyeing Groseilliers rather sharply, suddenly broke off the negotiations. When Captain Cole demanded the reason, the chief declared that it was on Groseilliers' account; him he had recognised as the Frenchman with whom he had had dealings many years before. Groseilliers stepped forward, and declared with a smile that the chief might possess himself in easiness on that score, as he was now to all intents and purposes an Englishman; and that as such he would always trade with the Tabitis.

"But you drove hard bargains," returned the chief. "You took our silkiest, softest, and richest furs, and you gave us but beads and ribbons. You told us the skins of the sable, and marten, and beaver were of little account to you, whereas the English give us for them, and the French traders as well, guns and hatchets in exchange."

This harangue does not seem to have particularly disconcerted Groseilliers; he was an old Indian trader; he returned a polite answer, renewing his expressions of amity. It made, nevertheless, a profound impression upon the other members of the party, who reported to Bailey on their return that the Indians thought Groseilliers too hard on them, and refused to deal with him. Indeed, they did not scruple to assert that the comparative failure of their expedition was owing to Groseilliers' presence; that both the Tabitis and the

Shechittiwans, hard by, were really possessed of peltries which they chose to conceal.

On hearing this intelligence, Bailey himself was induced to set out for Moose River. By rare good fortune, he found the Tabitis reinforced by a numerous band of Shechittiwans, who had journeyed thither some fifty leagues and were eager to trade. From this tribe, the Governor procured no fewer than fifteen hundred skins on very good terms. Charmed with his adventure, he decided to pursue his course, discover the Chechouan River, and thence coast along the west shore of the Bay, to Port Nelson, where there was constructed, as yet, no fort.

Bailey at Moose River.

On the 18th of July he arrived at Chechouan River, "where no Englishman had been before," but secured little or no beaver. He treated with the chief of the tribe he found there and with his son, who exacted from Bailey a promise that he would come in a ship and trade the next year. In return, they assured him they would provide a quantity of beaver and induce the Upland tribes to travel thither. Hardly had the sloop departed than, on the 27th, it ran upon a mass of floating ice and narrowly escaped foundering.

This catastrophe precipitated the Governor's return to Rupert's River. He arrived to find Groseilliers and his protégé Gorst at daggers drawn, and the factors, traders, and sailors almost at the point of mutiny, and all this because they objected to serve under a Frenchman.

Bailey now seems to have made up his mind what course to pursue with regard to Groseilliers; but if anything were lacking to complete his decision, he had not long to wait. On the next day but one, that is to say the 30th of August, a messenger appeared announcing the arrival of a canoe. In it was a Jesuit missionary, accompanied by one of Kas-kidi-dah's own sons. The worthy priest was in a sorry condition with regard to his apparel, most of which he had either been robbed of or been compelled to barter for food during his long sojourn in the wilderness. He had left Quebec during the preceding October, but had been detained for many months owing to the impassability of the route. He bore with him letters; one of them for Mr. Bailey from the Governor of Quebec. This epistle seems to have given Bailey a great deal of pleasure, and as a communication from one great man to another, he caused it to be publicly read out in the fort. The French Governor desired Bailey to treat the priest civilly, "on account of the amity between the two crowns;" and the bearer of this letter had no reason to complain of a lack of hospitality. He was clothed and entertained with great kindness.

Jesuit priest at Fort Charles.

Unhappily, on the very evening of his arrival, the Governor was made aware that the Jesuit had brought other letters, and that these had been delivered into the hands of Groseilliers. Always suspicious, he now became convinced of treachery. He saw in this harm-

less visit of a pious missionary a deep-laid plot to capture the fort and allow it to be pillaged by the hostile Indians. He ordered Groseilliers to appear before him. But Groseilliers was not to be found, and Gorst returned to say that both the Frenchmen were out walking together. Bailey, taking several men with him, now went himself in search of the pair; he confronted Groseilliers, and hurled a host of accusations at his head. To these accusations, all ill-founded and ill-advised, Groseilliers very promptly responded by knocking the Governor down. He then returned calmly to the fort, demanded his wages and possessions, and calling three of the Indians to his side, including the young brave who had accompanied the priest, set off valiantly into the wilderness. In due time he reached Quebec, where he rendered a faithful account to the authorities of what had transpired. He also forwarded to England, by way of New England, a minute account of his experiences, which was duly read out at one of the meetings of the Company.

The Jesuit, who had offered to proceed with Groseilliers, had been detained. He seems to have made himself very useful to the English in their dealings with the Indians, although he was thoroughly distrusted, as was to be expected, by the Governor.

On the 24th of September, a sloop was described in the river, which, with joy, they soon made out to be the *Prince Rupert*, just arrived from England. She

was commanded by Captain Gillam, and with her came the new Governor, William Lyddal, to supersede Bailey. Captain Gillam reported that the sister ship, the *Shaftesbury*, commanded by Captain Shepherd, was likewise at the mouth of the river. The new Governor's commission and instructions being read, all hands were immediately put to work, with the intention of unloading and reloading the ships for the return voyage immediately. Bailey seems to have expressed the greatest anxiety to proceed to London without delay; but at length he was induced to listen to reason. It was pointed out to him that the season would be far spent before the work of equipment could be properly concluded. After several councils, it was resolved that they should winter at Rupert's River; and no effort was made to unload the vessels until the following spring. In the meantime, the crews were not idle. Under Lyddal's direction they found employment in cutting timber and building houses, more particularly a bake-house and a brew-house, "which latter," says the chronicler, "added greatly to the comfort of the fort."

Arrival of the *Prince Rupert*.

CHAPTER VIII

1673–1682

PROGRESS OF THE COMPANY—CONFUSION AS TO THE NAMES AND NUMBER OF THE TRIBES—RADISSON GOES TO PARIS—HIS EFFORTS TO OBTAIN SUPPORT THERE, AND FROM PRINCE RUPERT, IN ENGLAND, FAIL—ARRIVAL OF M. DE LA CHESNAYE —WITH HIS HELP RADISSON SECURES SUPPORT—AND SAILS FOR QUEBEC—THENCE PROCEEDS WITH TWO SHIPS TO ATTACK THE ENGLISH PORTS IN HUDSON'S BAY—HIS ENCOUNTERS WITH GILLAM'S EXPEDITION FROM LONDON, AND HIS SON'S, FROM NEW ENGLAND.

RAPIDLY advancing in prosperity and reputation, and possessed of a basis of credit which gave it a welcome sense of solidity, the Company now renewed its efforts to extend its trade and settlements. The weekly meetings at Mr. Alderman John Horth's, which were so full of mystery to the public, continued to bear fruit; and at length a regular system was determined for the organisation and government of its distant dependencies.

All ships bound for Hudson's Bay were now ordered to visit Charlton Island, which lies about forty miles from the mouth of Rupert's River, in the extreme south of the Bay; and the island was also made a

rendezvous whither all factors were to bring all their merchandise for the purpose of loading the Company's ships. The geography of the district had hitherto, in spite of the researches of a long series of explorers, beginning with Frobisher, and ending with Fox, remained obscure. But the Company's servants had not been idle, and the Adventurers were soon in possession of carefully drawn charts, and maps of the straits, the Bay itself, and the lands surrounding it. They kept themselves also well-advised by lists, drawings, and detailed descriptions, of the tribes inhabiting the territories granted to them under the charter; and the discussions which went on over this subject were not lacking in humour. It is worth observing that for a great many years during the early history of the Company, its Governors, captains, chief factors, chief traders, and the rank and file of its employees could never by any chance agree, either as to the number or the characteristics of the aborigines. In concocting their reports many were animated purely by love of romance; others relied too implicitly on the tales told by the Indians themselves; others may be credited with being the victims of their own imaginations. Nor could the lists enumerating the tribes boast more consistency. Extracts from those of two Governors may be given here for purposes of comparison:—

Ignorance of the geography of Hudson's Bay.

Nations Visiting Hudson's Bay.

Bailey, 1673:	Lyddal, 1678:
Usquemos,	Askimows,
Nodwayes,	Odwayes,
Twegwayes,	Twagions,
Pankeshones,	Paggarshows,
Noridgewelks,	Narchuels,
Abenekays,	Penkayes,
Micmacks,	Micmackes,
Kilistinons,	Crilistinons,
Assinapoils,	Ossa-poets,
Cuchneways,	Kitchenayes,
Algonkins,	Algonkings,
Outaways,	Otawayes,
Outagamis.	Wattagamais.

No wonder, therefore, that the Adventurers in England were puzzled, and that at one of their later meetings Prince Rupert was forced to exclaim—

"Gentlemen, these Indians" (each member had been supplied with Governor Nixon's list) "are not our Indians. 'Fore God, out of the nineteen I see only five we have dealt with before."

Another worthy member declared, on a similar occasion, that the tribes frequenting the Bay were more volatile than the Bedouins. "These are not men, but chameleons"—was the remark of another Adventurer.

The chief cause of the confusion lay in the variations of spelling. More than a century was to elapse before a common orthography was adopted, and in the

interval it was impossible to fix the tribes by name with certainty. The name of no tribe perhaps underwent such vicissitudes of spelling and pronunciation as that described by the earliest Jesuit pioneers as the Ossa-poiles, which in our own day are known as the Assiniboines. They were in process of time the Poeles, Poets, the Pedlas, the Semplars, Oss-Semplars, Essapoils, and the Simpoils.[1]

Confusion of tribes.

At a general court held to consider the action of Governor Bailey, the majority of the Adventurers professed themselves rejoiced at having been quit of the services of the Sieurs Groseilliers and Radisson; yet there were not wanting others to openly regret the treatment these two men had received. As may be supposed, the most fervent of their advocates and defenders was Sir John Kirke, whose daughter had married Radisson, and who himself had lately been knighted by the king. He predicted some disaster to the Company from having dismissed these two faithful servants, and he was loud and persistent in asserting the bad faith and unjust suspicions of Bailey.

While the affairs of the Company were proceeding tranquilly at home, the conduct and employment of one of these two bushrangers was more enlivening. Chouart was passing his time in inactivity at Three Rivers. But his brother-in-law, after several ineffectual endeavours to establish a northern rivalry to the Com-

[1] Generally known to-day as the Stone Indians.

pany, had offered his services to the French Navy. This career, which at that period must have been, even for him, sufficiently eventful and exciting, was cut short by shipwreck in 1679. Losing all his property, even to his clothing, Radisson made his way first to Brest and then to Paris. The Vice-Admiral and Intendant of the Fleet having written in his favour, the Court was pleased to grant him a sum of one hundred crowns, and hope was also held out to him that he would be honoured by the command of a frigate. In the meantime he was accorded leave to go to England to fetch his wife.

Madame Radisson, otherwise Mistress Mary Kirke, appears to have caused her husband a great deal of mortification and numerous disappointments. There is no doubt that her continued residence in England, in spite of her husband's return to the French service, made him an object of suspicion to the French Court. Once when he endeavoured, in a memorable interview with Colbert, to press upon that Minister his scheme for ousting the English from Hudson's Bay, the Minister responded coldly:

Radisson in France.

"M. Radisson, you are suspected of being in league with the English, your father-in-law is one of the members of the English Company, and your wife resides under his roof."

"I made him understand," declared Radisson long afterwards, "that, though married, I was not master

of my wife. Her father would by no means consent to my bringing her to France with me."

These rebuffs determined him to make an attempt to better his worldly condition elsewhere. A true soldier of fortune, patriotism appears to have had little weight with him; he was as ready to serve under the English as the French. He returned to find his father-in-law more placable. Sir John had at this time certain claims against the French; and he doubtless fancied that Radisson might assist him in preferring these at the French Court. He took occasion to ask his father-in-law what chance there remained to him of again securing employment under the Company. "None, sir," replied Kirke; "both Bailey, Lyddal, and others are against you and have poisoned the minds of their employers. Prince Rupert is, however, your friend, and also Captain Gillam; but one dislikes to speak openly, and the other dare not."

Acting on this intelligence, Radisson resolved to see Rupert. The prince received him kindly enough; he took pains to show him his collection of mezzotints, and to explain some of his scientific curiosities. He even went so far as to condole with Radisson on the treatment he had received. But he had to point out that the temper of the Company was such that he feared it would be in vain for him to exercise his interest for his visitor's reinstatement.

Radisson, disappointed of his hopes, and frustrated in his desire to return with his wife, did not meet

with a warm welcome on the other side of the Channel. Colbert received him with black looks; and the suspicions which gathered about him were now strengthened rather than dissipated. In this extremity he repaired to the Marquis de Seignely, to whom he set forth substantially the same plan which he had cherished for years, of opening out the trade of the North, with the additional attraction now of dislodging the English from a commerce which had already proved vastly profitable. Seignely listened with interest, and requested time to reflect on the matter. At the second interview Radisson was not overwhelmed with disappointment, for he had expected no other issue; he was told flatly that he was regarded by the king as little better than a traitor, and that his Canadian project met with universal distrust.

Plan to dislodge the Company.

The outlook seemed discouraging indeed, when happily at this juncture there arrived in Paris M. de la Chesnaye, who was in charge of the fur-trade in Canada, as the head of the Compagnie du Nord. This event proved Radisson's salvation. He learned with great rejoicing that La Chesnaye's visit to France was actuated by a desire to report upon the intrusion of the English Company. La Chesnaye proved a true friend; he evinced himself most heartily in favour of the Government securing the services of Radisson in establishing a rival establishment, on the principle of those of the Company to which he had formerly been attached.

Many consultations took place, both Seignely and Chesnaye listening with great interest while Radisson explained the equipment and merchandise of the Hudson's Bay Company, which he strongly advised should be taken as a pattern in all practical extensions of the French fur-trade in those regions.

The only difficulty now presenting itself was to find money for the enterprise. The exchequer of the Court was at a low ebb; and it had a thousand calls upon its charity and liberality. Radisson must wait even for the few hundred crowns he so sadly needed for his passage to New France and his personal needs. There was, however, one force in France which could always be approached with a good courage when any enterprise in a new country required support, and always with success. It was the power which, though it had endured a thousand disappointments and sacrificed a thousand lives, and as many fortunes, in the attempt to teach the Gospel of Jesus in the wilderness, had adhered without wavering to its faith in the ultimate victory of the Cross over the savage nature of the Indians. No adventurer, if he had but a sufficiently plausible story, need turn away empty-handed from the door of the Jesuits. To the Jesuits of Paris Radisson presented himself as a good Catholic seeking to subvert the designs of the heretic English. He applied for assistance, and he was at length rewarded for his pains by a sum of five hundred crowns.

Radisson assisted by the Jesuits.

But nearly two years had passed before this assistance was procured. Radisson's debts had accumulated; his creditors were clamouring about him, threatening him with the sponging-house; no effort to elude them met with success, and at length he found himself at Rochelle, with scarce twenty crowns in his pocket over and above the cost of his passage. It was then that he made the resolve to reimburse the Jesuits, "if he should live to be worth so great a sum," and it is interesting to discover that two years later he kept his word. At present he could only trust to La Chesnaye, who was anxiously awaiting his arrival in Quebec. Thither Radisson arrived on the 25th of September 1681.

La Chesnaye showed much joy at seeing his friend; for in truth his own plans for seeking to share the northern trade of the English were nearly ripe. He declared that there was no time to be lost; but that in spite of the urgency of the matter the greatest circumspection would have to be observed, as Frontenac by no means desired to compromise the king without first seeing his way clear.

But if the Governor whose career was about to close was punctilious, the Intendant Duchesneau was not. He had already despatched a memoir to his superior relating to Hudson's Bay, and to what he believed to be the French rights there.

"They" (the English), he wrote, "are still in Hudson's Bay on the north and do great damage

to our fur-trade. The farmers [of the revenue] suffer in consequence by this diminution of the trade at Tadoussac, and throughout the entire country, because the English drive off the Outaoua nations. For the one and the other design they have two forts on the said Bay —the one towards Tadoussac and the other at Cape Henrietta Marie, on the side of the Assinibonetz. The sole means to prevent them succeeding in what is prejudicial to us in this regard would be to drive them by main force from that Bay, which belongs to us. Or, if there would be an objection in coming to that extremity, to construct forts on the rivers falling into the lakes, in order to stop the Indians at these points."

Duchesneau protests against English encroachments.

The zealous Intendant declared that should King Lewis adopt the resolution to arrange with the Duke of York for his possessions in that quarter, "in which case Boston could not resist," Canada would be ruined, "the French being naturally inconsistent and fond of novelty."

Finding, however, that they could obtain no official recognition of the enterprise, La Chesnaye at length resorted to a transparent fiction in order to account for Radisson's departure—a subterfuge which was the more necessary since many had begun to suspect his destination and urged the Governor to do nothing which would bring down on them the enmity of the English and their allies, the Iroquois. He requested

the Governor, if he would not countenance an expedition with license to trade on the shores of the Bay, to grant Radisson formal permission to return to France by way of New England in a vessel belonging to the Government of Acadia, which at that moment lay in the St. Lawrence ready to sail.

It was arranged privately that after his departure Radisson should proceed in this vessel only as far as Isle Percée in the Gulf, near the mouth of the river, and there await his kinsmen Groseilliers, his nephew Chouart, and the two ships which La Chesnaye was even then busily fitting out. Thus all official cognisance of the expedition would be avoided.

The terms agreed upon were, that in return for La Chesnaye's equipment, Radisson and Groseilliers were, provided certain conditions were carried out, to receive jointly half the profits of the venture, and La Chesnaye the other half. What these conditions were can only be guessed; but beyond all question, they concerned the capture or spoliation of the English trading posts on the Bay. Radisson took with him his nephew, Jean Baptiste, who had passed nearly the whole of his life among the Indians as a *coureur de bois;* the pilot, Pierre Allemand, and an old bushranger named Godefrey, who was well acquainted with the Indians of the northern regions. Groseilliers was to remain behind until the spring, when he was to have the command of the smaller of the two vessels. On the 4th of November the advance guard of the

Company's enemies leave Quebec.

expedition directed against the Company's establishment in Hudson's Bay left Quebec.

In the following spring the rendezvous was kept at the island named. Radisson is found complaining bitterly of the character of the vessels *St. Pierre* and *St. Anne*. The former he describes as an old craft of 50 tons only, "with twelve men of a crew, including those with me. There were goods enough for the trade aboard her," he adds, "but so scanty a supply of provisions that if I had not been so deeply engaged I should not venture on the enterprise."

If his case was scarcely hopeful, that of his brother-in-law was far worse. The latter's vessel could boast but little more than half the tonnage, and while her crew was larger by three men, she carried even fewer supplies. But Radisson and Groseilliers were not men to shrink from any enterprise because it seemed hazardous. They had led bold, reckless lives, and their spirits rose at the prospect of danger. It was afterwards alleged of this pair that one great cause of their disagreement with the Company was their absolute inability to remain quiet and content in the enjoyment of a regular traffic. Such a career seemed to their bold, energetic dispositions worthier of drapers' apprentices. It is said they counselled the Company not to think of establishing one or two trading posts and expect the Indians to come to them for trade, but to push on in the wilderness to the north and west,

Rejected advice of Radisson and Groseilliers.

building new depots and stirring up the hunters to greater activity and more profitable results. Had this advice been followed, the exploration of the great North-West would not only have been anticipated by almost a century; but by the occupation of its territory, the great evils of a later day would have been averted; nor would any one in England have challenged the Company's right to an exclusive trade in the regions granted by its charter.

But the Company was soon to learn that its earliest pioneers and forerunners were not to be cast off with impunity. The two bushrangers experienced considerable difficulty at the outset in propitiating and calming the fears of their crews, who were terrified, and not without reason, at the prospect of a voyage of 900 leagues in such craft as the *St. Pierre* and the *St. Anne*, and amidst rough water and ice. But they at length succeeded and effected a start.

After nineteen days the crew of Groseilliers' ship mutinied. Groseilliers' attempts to appease them seemed about to end in signal failure, when the man on watch cried out that a vessel was in sight to windward. Groseilliers seized his opportunity. "See!" he cried, pointing to the distant barque, "yonder is one of the English Company, laden with the profits of their trade in the Bay. Every man has his pocket full of gold and his stomach full of rum; and we shall have the same if we are not cowards enough to abandon our voyage."

After innumerable episodes, some of which almost ended in tragedy, Radisson, with his crew, on the 26th of August, arrived on the west coast of Hudson's Bay. On the following day he was joined by his brother-in-law in the *St. Anne* at the mouth of a river named by the Indians Ka-kirka-kiouay, translated by Radisson as "who goes, who comes."

Twelve days before their arrival another ship had entered this same river, commanded by their old friend Captain Gillam, and having on board John Bridgar, commissioned as Governor of the new settlement at Port Nelson.

Wholly ignorant of this fact, they advanced fifteen miles up stream. Radisson then left Groseilliers to build a fort, while he himself departed in search of savages with whom to trade. With him he took his nephew and Godefrey, all three being well armed with muskets and pistols. In the course of eight days they accomplished forty leagues and attained the upper part of the river, though without meeting a single savage. On the eighth day, however, their eyes were rejoiced by the sight of a large encampment of Indians, who, while not especially rich in furs, were eager to conclude a treaty with the French, and to encourage their settlement in the country. Radisson now decided to return, accompanied by some of the savages, and on the 12th day of September rejoined his brother-in-law, whose fort he found pretty well advanced.

Hardly had he arrived when the sudden booming of a

cannon startled the settlement. It was the first time the Indians had ever heard the sound, and they expressed much astonishment and apprehension. Although the two adventurers hastened to reassure their allies, they were themselves hardly less disturbed. Radisson made up his mind to ascertain immediately whence the firing came, and with this intention he embarked in a canoe and went to the mouth of the river. In passing to the opposite bank of the stream, and while in the vicinity of a small island, they perceived signs of European habitation. A tent had been erected, and at that moment a log-house was being built. After a stealthy reconnoitre, lasting the whole night, Radisson and his companions in their canoe advanced boldly at daybreak from the opposite shore. The islanders were engaged in making a repast when Radisson attracted their attention. Speaking to them first in French, and finding that none of them understood that tongue, he addressed them in English. He asked them what was their business in those parts.

The younger Gillam discovered.

Their leader quickly responded: "We are English, and come for the beaver trade."

"By whose authority?" asked Radisson; "do you possess a commission?" The other replied that he did not himself possess such a document, but that his father did, and that he and his companions hailed from New England. Whereupon Radisson, still seated in his canoe at some distance from the shore, informed

them that they had not a shadow of right to be in those regions, which he himself had discovered and settled for the French some years before. He drew upon his imagination so far as to intimate that he was at that moment in command of a large force of Frenchmen in the neighbourhood, who would effectually maintain the sovereignty of King Lewis and his exclusive trading right in this territory; and he concluded his harangue, which was delivered at the top of his voice, by advising the party of New Englanders to embark as soon as possible and to return from whence they came.

Before any reply could be made, a cry broke from the lips of both the leaders. The canoe had touched the bank, and a recognition was mutual. The New Englander was Benjamin Gillam, old Zachary's son; and, as may be supposed, he possessed a very high admiration for a man of whom he had heard so much. They speedily embraced, but Radisson is careful to inform us that he did not entirely trust his young friend. When Benjamin's ship appeared at the mouth of the river, and Radisson was invited to go on board, he did so, but he took the precaution of insisting upon two Englishmen being left on shore as hostages. It was not without misgivings that, as he neared the vessel in their canoe, he observed the captain hoisting the English emblem and discharging, moreover, a number of cannon shots.

"I told him," says Radisson, "that it was not

necessary to fire any more, for fear of causing jealousy amongst our people, who might show themselves hostile. He proposed that we should negotiate together. I promised that I would persuade our other officers to consent that, since the season was already too far advanced for them to withdraw, he should pass the winter where he was without their doing him any mischief."

In short, Radisson was resolved at all costs to keep up appearances. He even went so far as to grant Gillam formal permission to continue building his house, "barring fortifications," and to guarantee him against insults from the Indians, over whom he professed to have absolute power. The two men parted on good terms; and perhaps Gillam's complaisance was well-advised. Radisson confesses that had the English shown themselves refractory or exhibited any disposition to assert rights over the country, it was his firm intention to concert a plan for seizing their ship, which, he observes, was an "excellent prize," inasmuch as it held no commission or warrant to trade from any power.

It afterwards appeared that this enterprise of the New England ship was set on foot by Gillam senior, who, dissatisfied with his profits under the Company, sought to adventure an expedition on his own account from Boston. He was destined to pay the penalty for this indiscretion.

Happy at having come out of this encounter so

easily, Radisson and his party re-embarked in their canoe and struck out northwards. Another surprise was in store for them. A ship under full sail was on the point of entering the river. More strategy was necessary. The party regained the shore and instantly kindled a huge bonfire, upon which they cast grass and leaves so as to produce a thick column of smoke. Their purpose was to attract the attention and arrest the progress of the vessel, and in this they succeeded. Believing they had come upon an Indian settlement, and anxious to reconnoitre before proceeding farther, the parties aboard the ship cast anchor immediately and so remained motionless in the channel all night.

Arrival of Bridgar.

Early in the morning they saw that a boat was being lowered from the ship, and while it was filling with occupants, Radisson made ready to receive them. Each of his party was posted, armed, at the entrance to the wood, while Radisson himself walked down to the shore to greet the strangers.

They were soon within hail. Radisson set up a loud cry, Indian fashion, for the purpose of eliciting a response. He was disappointed in this; for the boat approached steadily and silently; there was a movement of the oars, but most of the figures appeared stern and motionless. The boat grounded ten yards from where Radisson stood with folded arms, and a general attitude of defiance. One of

the crew had got a leg over the side of the boat when our bushranger cried out in a loud voice:

"Hold, in the King's name." And then presenting his carbine, he added, "I forbid you to land."

The occupants of the boat were astonished.

"Who are you?" they asked, "and what is your business?"

"I am a Frenchman," was the answer, delivered in English; "and I hold this country for his Most Christian Majesty, King Lewis!"

Radisson signalled to his followers, who emerged from their retreat, making a brave show of their weapons. The *coup* seemed destined to be successful. The leader of the boat party, visibly impressed, standing erect in his craft without any attempt on the part of his followers to land, replied:

"I beg to inform you, gentlemen, that we hail from London. Our ship yonder is the *Prince Rupert*, belonging to the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company and commanded by Captain Zachary Gillam."

"You arrive too late. This country is already in the possession of the King of France, and its trade belongs to the Northern Company of Canada."

A short dispute succeeded. Suddenly changing his tactics, Governor Bridgar, for it was he, feigned acquiescence, admitted that after all Radisson might be right, and requested the privilege of landing and saluting him.

The two leaders now conversed amicably. Radisson

took occasion to elaborate the narrative to which he had recently treated young Gillam, without, however, mentioning the circumstance of his having met Benjamin. He did not scruple to allege a lengthy residence in the region, detailing his forces, both French and Indian, with a fine display of exactitude. Commenced on shore, the interview was transferred to the ship; Radisson, while accepting Bridgar's hospitality, took care to detain, as before, two or three hostages on land. On board the *Prince Rupert* he embraced Gillam, and listened with a real interest to the old sea-dog's relation of what had been happening in Europe, and of the affairs of the Company. For himself, he readily volunteered the information that he and his brother-in-law Groseilliers had two fine large vessels in the vicinity, while the third was shortly expected. He likewise made no secret of the fact that a huge fort was being constructed hard by in the interests of the French Company. In all of these statements Governor Bridgar professed absolute credence, whatever may have been his private opinion of their value.

The Bushranger's mendacity.

In reality, however, he was not deceived; and if it had not been for Radisson's precaution as to the hostages, there is some reason to believe he would have detained his guest on board the Company's ship to ruminate for a while on his treachery to the Company. Even allowing for the truth of Radisson's assertions regarding the occupation by the French

of Port Nelson and the surrounding neighbourhood in large numbers, Bridgar was not to be dissuaded by mere words from his intention to establish a factory there. He had every confidence in the Company's power; and he determined to carry out fully his instructions.

No sooner, therefore, had Radisson departed than a majority of the people on board the *Prince Rupert* landed and commenced building a fort.

The French party hiding in the woods spied on their movements; and before rejoining their comrades at their own settlement, they had the privilege of seeing the erection of Fort Nelson, the fourth establishment of the Company in the Hudson's Bay territories, well under way.

CHAPTER IX

1682–1683

Death of Prince Rupert—The Company's difficulty in procuring proper Servants—Radisson at Port Nelson—The two Gillams—Their meeting—Capture of the New England Party—The First Scotchman in the Bay—Governor Bridgar carried off Prisoner—Indian Visitors to the Fort—Disasters to the Ships—The French burn the Island Fort—Radisson's harangue to the Indians—Return to France.

On the 28th of November, 1682, at his house in Spring Garden, died the first Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. The prince had been in ill-health for some time, he was in his sixty-third year, and he had lived a stirring and adventurous life. His demise occasioned general regret, more amongst the people than at Court; for, as a writer of that day observed, "he had of late years proved a faithful counsellor to the King, but a greater patriot to English liberty; and therefore was towards his latter end neglected by the Court to that degree that nothing passed between him and his great relations but bare civilities in the common forms." On the sixth of the ensuing month his body was privately

Death of Prince Rupert.

interred among others of the Royal Family in a vault in Henry VII.'s Chapel, Westminster Abbey.

A week later there was held a General Court of the Company, at which the Duke of York was chosen to succeed Rupert in the governorship. Besides the Duke himself, his Royal Highness the Duke of Albemarle, Lord Arlington, and Mr. Hays all delivered enthusiastic panegyrics on the deceased prince, rightly attributing to his zeal, judgment, and enterprise the successful establishment of the Company. And the meeting then adjourned out of regret for the dead Governor without proceeding to further business.

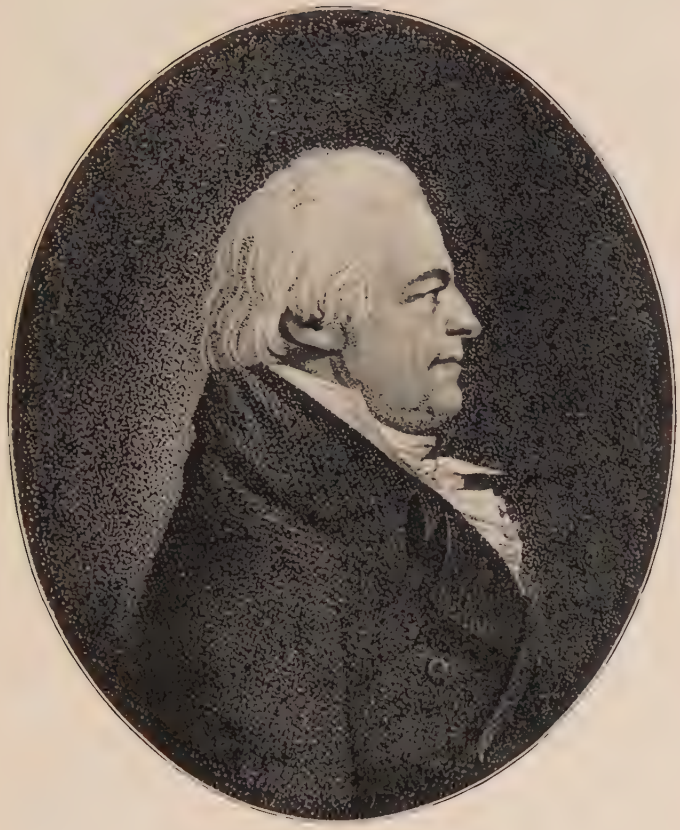
More than fifteen years had elapsed since Medard Chouart des Groseilliers had first fired Prince Rupert with his project of founding a great fur-traffic in the unknown and unexplored regions of the New World. The prince had lived to see that project succeed even beyond his most sanguine expectations. Now, at his death, the Company owned four ships; and after all the cost of its plant, its ships, and its equipment had been paid, it was returning an annual profit of two hundred per cent. on its capital. It was well known that his Highness favoured greater activity, and one of his last acts had been to sign the commission of John Bridgar as Governor of the new settlement at Port Nelson. But during his own Governorship, the Company, feeling, no doubt, that they must balance the prince's zeal for adventure with considerable caution, opposed the policy of rapid expansion with

somewhat excessive prudence; and it was only after his death that they felt confident in pursuing a more vigorous and enterprising plan of commerce.

Under date of April 27th, 1683, while the drama between the French and English was being enacted at Port Nelson, the following instructions were addressed to Fort Albany's Governor, regarding trade with the interior: "You are to choose out from amongst our servants such as are best qualified with strength of body and the country language to travel and to penetrate into the country, and to draw down the Indians by fair and gentle means to trade with us."

But the Company was to learn that the parsimony which then characterised its policy was not calculated to foster the success of its aims. The majority of the men it sent out from England could not be classified under the head of adventurous spirits, ready to dare all for mere excitement and the prospect of gain. They were for the most part young men gifted with no more aptitude for the work in the wilderness than a disinclination to pursue their callings at home. No small number were dissatisfied apprentices; one, William Evans, had been a drawer at the Rainbow Inn; Portman had sent his scullion.

Even at that early day the staffs employed on the plantations were recruited from amongst the very class least competent to exploit those regions. The majority of the applicants for employment in the Company's service in the seventeenth century were not men of



ALEXANDER HENRY

From an engraving by P. MAVERICK *from an original miniature*

character and vigour, or even of robust physique, but rather hare-brained artisans of the wild, dare-devil type, whose parents and friends foresaw for them, if London or Bristol formed the sphere of their talents, a legal and violent rather than a natural termination of their respective careers.

Sargeant's response to the foregoing injunction certainly served to enlighten his superiors. "I shall not be neglectful," he wrote, "as soon as I can find any man capable and willing to send up into the country with the Indians, to endeavour to penetrate into what the country will and may produce, and to effect their utmost in bringing down the Indians to our factory; but your Honours should give good encouragement to those who undertake such extraordinary service, or else I fear that there will be but few that will embrace such employment."

Company's encouragement requested.

The rebuke may have been just, but it seems to have given offence to some of the more pompous members of the Company; and Sargeant was desired not to cast any further reflection on his employers in his communications to them. Nevertheless, the Company was soon to learn the value of a less niggardly policy.

Meanwhile, for ten days, the two ex-employees, Radisson and Groseilliers, gave no further evidence of their presence to the English at the new settlement on Nelson River. But on the tenth day their curiosity

and uneasiness regarding the conduct of the English Governor, Bridgar, and the other servants of the Company, had reached such a pitch that it was decided without further consideration that Radisson should start off at once to reconnoitre their behaviour. The actual distance between Fort Bourbon, on the Hays River, and the Company's factory on Nelson River was not above fifty miles; but owing to the dangerous character of the river, and the necessity for delay before an attempt could be made to cross it, Radisson and his party consumed fourteen days on the journey.

On their arrival on the 3rd of February, one of the first objects to attract their attention was the *Prince Rupert*, held fast in the ice and mud about a mile from where the factory was being erected. At the same time they met the Governor, who was out on a hunting expedition with the chief mate of the vessel. Satisfying himself that no treachery was intended, Radisson accepted Bridgar's invitation to enter the log-house which he had caused to be built for his own occupation, and there introduced one of the Frenchmen who accompanied him as the captain of an imaginary ship, which he averred had arrived in his behalf from France. "Mr. B. believed it and anything else I chose to tell him," remarks Radisson naively, "I aiming always to prevent him from having any knowledge of the English interloper." While engaged in the pleasing diversion of drinking each other's health, a number of musket shots were

Bridgar's credulity.

fired. The crew of the vessel taking no notice of this, the bushranger concluded that those on board were not on their guard and might readily be surprised.

With this condition uppermost in his mind, the Frenchman quitted Bridgar, having first allayed any suspicion which might have naturally arisen as to the intention of the party. The latter went boldly on board the ship, and no hindrance being offered, their leader had a colloquy with Captain Gillam. The latter, while he received the visit civilly enough, found occasion to let Radisson know that he was far from entirely trusting him. When his visitor suggested that he was running a great risk in allowing the *Prince Rupert* to remain grounded, Gillam bluntly requested Radisson to mind his own business, adding that he knew perfectly well what he was doing—a boast which, as the sequel showed, was certainly not well founded. Radisson was determined not to be put out of temper, and returned a mild answer.

Winter, even in all its rigour, seems to have caused no alarm in our indomitable bushranger. For the next two months, as we shall see, he continued to scour backwards and forwards through the country, inspiring his followers and urging them onward to the prosecution of a plan which was obvious to them all. Gillam the elder had not the faintest suspicion that his son was in the locality. Radisson now deemed it expedient to resume relations with Gillam the younger.

He regained the island where he had left Benjamin, and was instantly made aware that the New Englanders had been considerably less idle than the Company's servants; having completed a very creditable fort and mounted it with six pieces of cannon. Upon Benjamin Gillam our inimitable bushranger passed off the same subterfuge with which he had hoodwinked Zachary, speaking fluently of his newly-arrived ship, her cargo and crew. To cap his narrative, he proceeded to introduce her captain, who was none other than the old pilot, Pierre Allemand, who, from the description of his appearance still extant, looked every inch the bold, fierce, and uncompromising mariner. He had a great deal to tell Benjamin likewise of the Company's post near by, which he said contained forty soldiers.

"Let them be forty devils," exclaimed Gillam, junior, "we have built a good fort and are afraid of nothing."

Whereupon Radisson gently reminded him that according to his agreement he was to have built no fort whatever. In reply to this Benjamin begged his visitor not to take umbrage at such a matter, as he never intended to dispute the rights of the French in the region; the fort was merely intended as a defence against the Indians.

A manœuvre of Radisson's.

As the evening wore on, a new manœuvre suggested itself to Radisson. He resolved to bring father and son together; and no sooner had he formed this resolve than he revealed to Benjamin Gillam the proximity of the *Prince Rupert*

and her commander. He described the means by which an encounter might be effected without eliciting the suspicions of Governor Bridgar or any of the Company's servants. It consisted briefly in young Benjamin's disguising himself as a Frenchman and a bushranger. The scheme met with the young man's hearty approbation, and the details were settled as Radisson had designed.

On the following day the party set out through the snow. Arriving at the point of land opposite to which the Company's ship lay, Radisson posted two of his best men in the woods on the path which led to the factory. He instructed them to allow the Governor to pass should he come that way, but that if he returned from the ship unaccompanied or prior to their own departure they were to seize and overpower him on the spot. With such precautions as these, Radisson felt himself safe, and went on board the *Prince Rupert* accompanied by Gillam. He introduced his two companions into the captain's room without any notice on the part of Gillam the elder, and the mate and another man he had with him. Leaning across the table, upon which was deposited a bulky bottle of rum, Radisson whispered to the Company's captain that he had a secret of the highest importance to communicate if he would but dismiss the others. Gillam readily sent away the mate, but would not dismiss his second attendant until Radisson, again in a whisper, informed him that the black-bearded man in the strange head-gear was his own son.

After communicating this intelligence Radisson had his way. The next few moments were devoted to embraces and to an interchange of news, for Captain Gillam and Benjamin had not met for two years. The sire could not refrain from explaining to his son that he was running a great risk; he declared it would be ruinous to him if it got to the Governor's ears that there was any collusion between them. Radisson again professed his friendship, but added that in his opinion neither of the parties had any right to be where they were, he having taken possession for the King of France. "This territory is all his Most Christian Majesty's," he said. "The fort we have built yonder we call Fort Bourbon, and none have any right here but such as own allegiance to Lewis XIV." He observed that nothing would cause a rupture of the friendly relations now subsisting between French and English but the trade in peltries, trade which he had too great reason to fear they hoped to initiate with the Indians in the spring.

Meeting of father and son.

The elder Gillam coolly responded that the ship he commanded, and the spot on which they were then assembled, luckily belonged not to himself, but to the Hudson's Bay Company.

"With regard to the trade, gentlemen," said he, "you have nothing to fear from me. Even though I don't carry a solitary beaver back to the Thames, I shall not trouble myself, being sure of my wages."

This interview was prolonged. The healths of the

Kings of France and England, Prince Rupert and M. Colbert (quite in ignorance of the death of the two last named) were drunk with zeal and enthusiasm. In the midst of all this, that which Radisson had anticipated, occurred. Governor Bridgar, notified of Radisson's return, came to the ship in hot haste. On his joining the group, he remarked meaningly that the fort the French had constructed must be nearer than he had been given to think, since its commandant could effect so speedy a return. He evinced himself very uneasy in mind concerning the Frenchman's intentions. Before their departure, young Gillam came very near being betrayed. He was partially recognised by one of the traders who accompanied the Governor. But the whole episode passed off without serious consequences.

Gillam nearly betrayed.

None too soon did the party return to young Gillam's fort on the island, for a tremendous blizzard ensued, sweeping the whole country, and forcing Radisson to remain for some days within doors. As soon as the storm had subsided, however, Radisson started off, declining Gillam's offer of his second mate to accompany him back to the French settlement.

"I managed to dissuade him," he writes, "having my reasons for wishing to conceal the road we should take. On leaving we went up from the fort to the upper part of the river, but in the evening we retraced our steps, and next morning found ourselves in sight of the sea, into which it was necessary to enter in

order to pass the point and reach the river in which was our habitation. But everything was so covered with ice that there was no apparent way of passing farther. We found ourselves, indeed, so entangled in the ice that we could neither retreat nor advance towards the shore to make a landing. It was necessary, however, that we should pass through the ice or perish. We remained in this condition for four hours without being able to advance or retire, and in great danger of our lives. Our clothes were frozen on us, and we could only move with difficulty; but at last we made so strong an attempt that we arrived at the shore, our canoe being all broken up. Each of us took our baggage and arms, and marched in the direction of our habitation without finding anything to eat for three days, except crows and birds of prey, which are the last to leave these countries."

Fort Bourbon was reached at length. Radisson reported to his brother-in-law all that had passed. Groseilliers was not long in counselling what was best to be done. In his opinion the first thing necessary was to secure possession of young Gillam's ship. Time pressed, and the spring would soon be upon them, bringing with it the Indians to barter. He argued that delay might prove fatal, inasmuch as Bridgar might at any moment learn of the presence of the New England interlopers; and in that event he would probably make an effort to capture their fort and add their forces to his own. If this were

done, the chances of the French of overpowering the English traders would be slight, and their voyage would have been undertaken for nothing.

It was therefore agreed that Groseilliers should remain in charge of the fort, while his kinsman should immediately return to Nelson River. In a few days they once more parted, Radisson setting out with a fresh contingent, thoroughly resolved upon action.

Calamity to the Company's ship.

The first discovery he made, on arriving at the scene of his proposed operations, was that the Company's ship, the *Prince Rupert*, was frozen fast in the ice, and must inevitably perish when the spring floods came. He speedily ascertained also that the Governor, by no means relishing their presence in the vicinity, was already planning measures to thwart, if not to capture, his rivals; for he had sent out two sailors charged with the task of discovering the exact whereabouts of the French and the extent of their strength and equipment.

These two spies Radisson promptly captured—no difficult task indeed, for they had lost their way and were half-frozen and almost famished. The anticipated fate of the *Prince Rupert* was not long delayed. The tidings shortly reached Radisson that she was a total wreck, and with it came also the news of the loss of her captain, the mate, and four sailors. A subsequent report, however, informed him that Gillam had escaped with his life.

Receiving this intelligence, Radisson presented him-

self before the Governor to see how he was affected by such a calamity.

He found Bridgar drinking heavily, but resolved to keep up appearances, and to withhold from the French any knowledge of what had happened. He affected to believe the ship safe, merely observing that she had shifted her position a few leagues down the river. Radisson asserts that at this time the Company's factory was short of provisions. It is impossible that this could have been the case. The assertion was probably made to cover his own depredations on the stores of the Company.

Parting from the Governor, Radisson presented himself before Gillam the younger, to whom he did not as yet choose to say anything concerning his father and the loss of his ship. Under various pretences he induced Gillam to pay him a visit at Fort Bourbon. The latter does not seem at this time to have been aware of the intention of the French towards him. But he was soon to be undeceived.

"I remained quiet for a month," says Radisson, in the course of his extraordinary narrative, "treating young Gillam, my new guest, well and with all sorts of civilities, which he abused on several occasions. For having apparently perceived that we had not the strength I told him, he took the liberty of speaking of me in threatening terms behind my back, treating me as a pirate, and saying that in spite of me he would trade in spring with the Indians. He had even

the hardihood to strike one of my men, which I pretended not to notice; but, having the insolence later, when we were discussing the privileges of New England, to speak against the respect due the best of kings, I treated him as a worthless dog for speaking in that way, and told him that, having had the honour to eat bread in his service, I would pray to God all my life for his Majesty. He left me, threatening that he would return to his fort, and that when he was there I would not dare to speak to him as I had done. I could not expect to have a better opportunity to begin what I had resolved to do. I told this young brute then that I had brought him from his fort, that I would take him back myself when I pleased, not when he wished. He answered impertinently several times, which obliged me to threaten that I would put him in a place of safety if he was not wiser. He asked me then if he was a prisoner. I said I would consider it, and that I would secure my trade since he threatened to interrupt it. I then withdrew to give him time to be informed by the Englishman how his father's life was lost with the Company's ship, and the bad situation of Mr. Bridgar. I left in their company a Frenchman who understood English, unknown to them. When I had left, young Gillam urged the Englishman to fly, and to go to his master and assure him that he would give him six barrels of powder, and other supplies, if he would undertake to deliver him out of my hands. The

Radisson's threats.

Englishman made no answer, but he did not inform me of the proposition that had been made him (I had learned that from the Frenchman, who had learned everything, and thought it was time to act for my security)."

In the evening Radisson said nothing of what he knew of the plot. He asked those in his train if the muskets were in their places, which he had put around to act as guarantee against surprise. At the word *musket* young Gillam, who did not know what was meant, grew alarmed, and, according to Radisson, wished to fly, believing that it was intended to kill him. But his flight was arrested by his captor, who took occasion to free him from his apprehension. The next morning, however, the bush-ranger's plans were openly divulged. He told Gillam that he was about to take his fort and ship.

"He answered haughtily that even if I had a hundred men I could not succeed, and that his people would have killed more than forty before they could reach the palisades. This boldness did not astonish me, being very sure that I would succeed in my design."

Having secured Gillam the younger, it was now necessary to secure the fort of which he was master. The intrepid Frenchman started for Hays' Island with nine men, and gaining an entrance by strategy, he cast off the mask of friendship, and boldly demanded the keys of the fort and the whole stock of arms and powder. He added

Hays' Island fort.

that in the event of their refusal to yield he would raze the fort to the ground. No resistance seems to have been attempted, and Radisson took formal possession of the place in the name of the King of France. This ceremony being concluded, he ordered Jenkins, the mate, to conduct him to the ship, and here formal possession was taken in the same fashion, without any forcible objection on the part of the crew. Some explanation of this extraordinary complaisance, if Radisson's story of the number of men he took with him be true, may be found in the young commander's unpopularity, he having recently killed his supercargo in a quarrel.

Nevertheless, Benjamin Gillam was not to be altogether without friends.

A certain Scotchman, perchance the first of his race in those regions, which were afterwards to be forever associated with Scottish zeal and labours, wishing to show his fidelity to his chief, escaped, and eluding the efforts of the fleetest of the French bushrangers to catch him, arrived at Fort Nelson and told his tale. The Governor's astonishment may be conceived. He had hitherto no inkling of the presence of the New England interlopers, and although his captain and fellow-servant was not equally ignorant, Gillam had kept his counsel well. The Governor decided at once to head a party of relief, in which he was seconded by the elder Gillam, who was at the moment only just recovering from

illness caused by exposure during the shipwreck. The *Susan* was their first point of attack. Under the cover of night they made a determined effort to recapture her for the Company. It is possible that the attempt might have succeeded had not Radisson, suspecting the plan, despatched his entire available force at the same time, and completely overpowered the Governor's men. He thought at first sight that Bridgar himself was among his prisoners, but the Governor was not to be caught in that fashion; he had not himself boarded the ship. The Scotchman who accompanied him, however, was not so fortunate; he fell into Radisson's hands, and suffered for his zeal. He was tied to a post and informed that his execution would take place without ceremony on the morrow. The sentence was never carried out. For Radisson, after exposing his prisoner to the cold all night in an uncomfortable position, seems to have thought better of his threat, and after numerous hardships the Scot at length regained his liberty.

Reinforcements for the French now arrived from Groseilliers. Believing himself now strong enough to beard the lion in his lair, Radisson decided to lose no more time in rounding off his schemes. First, however, he saw fit to address a letter to the Governor asking him if he "approved the action of the Company's people whom he held prisoners, who had broken two doors and the storeroom of his ship, in order to carry off the powder."

Bridgar's reply was that he owed no explanation to a renegade employee of the Company. Radisson had not been sincere in his professions, and he had dealt basely and deceitfully with him in preserving silence on the subject of the interlopers. "As I had proper instructions," concluded Bridgar, in a more conciliatory strain, "on setting sail from London to seize all ships coming to this quarter, I would willingly have joined hands with you in capturing this vessel. If you wish me to regard you as sincere, you will not keep this prize for your own use."

The other's response was rapid and masterly. He marched upon Fort Nelson with twelve men, and by the following nightfall was master of the English establishment. This feat nearly drove the unhappy Governor to despair, and he sought solace by applying himself to the rum cask with greater assiduity than ever. In the frame of mind thus superinduced, John Bridgar, the first Governor of Port Nelson, was carried off a prisoner to Fort Bourbon.

This post was built of logs, as the others had been, but there was a bastion of stone at one end facing the river. It occupied, as nearly as one may now ascertain, the site upon which was afterwards reared York Factory. But in the course of the seventy years following the post was shifted slightly from site to site, when the exigencies of fire and other causes of destruction demanded a new building.

A few days after the Governor's arrival at Fort

Bourbon, the first Indians began to appear with provisions, which were now beginning to be very sorely required. To the chief of this band Radisson related the story, properly garnished, of his exploits, realising well how such things appeal to the savage heart. While the Indians were pondering upon his valour, great was their surprise to behold about the fort a number of English whom Radisson had made prisoners; and upon learning that there were others at York Factory and Hays' Island, they very handsomely offered 200 beavers for permission to go thither and massacre them. This offer Radisson wisely declined; but it seems clear that he did his best to stir up enmity amongst his Indian friends against the English. In this he was not entirely successful. Good news travels fast, too; and the Indians had got wind of Bridgar's boast that rather than see the trade pass into the hands of the French, it was his intention to offer six axes for a beaver and as much merchandise in proportion.

They had, besides, reason to believe in the superior generosity of the English traders as compared with the French.

It was now April, 1683. On the 22nd a disaster little foreseen by Radisson or Groseilliers occurred, which involved the destruction of their own frail ships. The *St. Pierre* and the *St. Anne* had been hauled into a small stream as far as possible in the woods and there sheltered by a knoll. At ten

o'clock on the night named all at Fort Bourbon were awakened by a frightful noise, caused by the breaking up of the ice. The occupants of the fort rushed outside to find the waters everywhere rising with almost incredible rapidity; and the masses of ice blocking up the mouth of the creek caused a complete general submersion. La Chesnaye's two vessels offered no strong resistance to the flood, and presently began to crack and splinter in all parts. In a few hours all that remained sound were the bottoms, clinging fast to the ice and mud.

Destruction of La Chesnaye's vessels.

A similar fate was apprehended for the New England ship, and Radisson made all haste thither. She was saved only by his adopting the suggestion of Bridgar, that the ice be carefully cut all about the *Susan*, as he had heard of Governor Bailey's doing on a previous occasion. The ice once cut, the vessel was only pushed by the strength of the floes to one side, where she remained aground with little damage.

The chief concern of the leaders of the French now was to get the English safely out of the country as soon as possible, before the arrival of the Company's ships. To this end Radisson and Groseilliers offered them the hull of the *St. Anne*, which, they believed, could with industry be patched up with new timber sufficiently well to withstand a voyage. When the English saw that these were the best terms they could expect, and that if they were left at the mercy of the

Indians a much worse fate might be in store for them, they set to work with a will. The labour proved arduous, and they had suffered terribly. Four had died from cold and hunger, and two had been poisoned from having rashly drunk of a liquor they had found in the medicine-room chest, without knowing its nature; another had had his arm broken quite recently by a musket shot while out hunting. The Governor felt that his sole hope lay in the expected ships of the Company. He seems to have always adopted a high tone in dealing with the French, even to the last. He declared to Radisson that it was only one of three things that could oblige him to abandon the place, "the order of his masters, force, or famine." Groseilliers now counselled burning the island fort, in order to do away with the necessity of keeping perpetual guard there, and of always taking precautions to protect themselves against the Governor's intrigues.

This advice was acted upon forthwith; the fort was burned and a small lodge erected to accommodate such of the New Englanders as had not been carried to Fort Bourbon, or were not at work on the hull of the wrecked ship.

Early in May the Indians began to appear in great numbers. Bridgar—who, divested of his command and robbed of his stores, was now allowed at large—heard of their arrival with joy. He seems to have believed that their chiefs would not repudiate their treaties with the Company. He hoped in any case to

be granted the privilege of a conference with them, but in this he was quickly undeceived. Radisson went forward to meet the Indians, who had come well loaded with peltries, and who were much perturbed at discovering the helpless state of the Governor and the ascendency of the French. But in spite of their solemn covenant, they showed no disinclination to trade with the latter, provided Groseilliers and his brother-in-law would do so on the same terms as the English. Both the bushrangers, however, seem to have been determined to put an immediate stop to what they termed folly. Let the Company give six axes for a beaver if it chose; for themselves they would countenance no such wantonness; two would suffice.

Arrival of the Indians.

The tribe being assembled, and having spread out their customary gifts, consisting of beaver tails, smoked moose tongues, and pemmican, one of the leading braves arose and said :—

"Men who pretend to give us life, do you wish us to die? You know what beaver is worth, and the trouble we have to take it. You call yourselves our brothers, and yet will not give us what those give who make no such profession. Accept our gifts, and let us barter, or we will visit you no more. We have but to travel a hundred leagues and we will encounter the English, whose offers we have heard."

On the conclusion of this harangue, silence reigned for some moments. All eyes were turned on the two

French traders. Feeling that now or never was the time to exhibit firmness, Radisson, without rising to his feet, addressed the whole assemblage in haughty accents.

"Whom dost thou wish I should answer? I have heard a dog bark; when a man shall speak he will see I know how to defend my conduct and my terms! We love our brothers and we deserve their love in return. For have we not saved them all from the treachery of the English?"

Radisson overawes the Indians.

Uttering these words fearlessly, he leapt to his feet and drew a long hunting-knife from his belt. Seizing by the scalp-lock the chief of the tribe, who had already adopted him as his son, he asked, "Who art thou?" To which the chief responded, as was customary, "Thy father."

"Then," cried Radisson, "if that is so, and thou art my father, speak for me. Thou art the master of my goods; but as for that dog who has spoken, what is he doing in this company? Let him go to his brothers, the English, at the head of the Bay. Or he need not travel so far: he may, if he chooses, see them starving and helpless on yonder island: answering to my words of command.

"I know how to speak to my Indian father," continued Radisson, "of the perils of the woods, of the abandonment of his squaws and children, of the risks of hunger and the peril of death by foes. All these you avoid by trading with us here. But although I

am mightily angry, I will take pity on this wretch and let him still live. Go," addressing the brave with his weapon outstretched, "take this as my gift to you, and depart. When you meet your brothers, the English, tell them my name, and add that we are soon coming to treat them and their factory yonder as we have treated this one."

The speaker knew enough of the Indian character, especially in affairs of trade, to be aware that a point once yielded to them is never recovered. And it is but just to say that the terms he then made of three axes for a beaver were thereafter adopted, and that his firmness saved the Company many a cargo of these implements. His harangue produced an immediate impression upon all save the humiliated brave, who declared that if the Assiniboines came hither to barter he would lie in ambush and kill them.

The French trader's reply to this was to the Indian mind a terrible one.

"I will myself travel into thy country," he said, "and eat sagamite in thy grandmother's skull."

While the brave and his small circle of friends were livid with fear and anger, Radisson ordered three fathoms of tobacco to be distributed; observing contemptuously to the hostile minority, that as for them they might go and "smoke women's tobacco in the country of the lynxes." The barter began, and when at nightfall the Indians departed, not a skin was left amongst them.

It was now time to think of departure. As a precautionary measure it was decided to despatch Bridgar and his companions first. But at the last moment some trouble seems to have arisen as to which vessel the English should have to convey them to more hospitable shores. Bridgar himself would have preferred to go in the ship, and at first his passage in that craft had been arranged for; but it was at length settled that he should be carried with the brothers-in-law in their own small barque.

Departure of the English.

After numerous vicissitudes, which would need a chapter to describe, the *St. Anne* arrived at the mouth of the St. Lawrence early in October.

At Tadoussac was a trading post belonging to the French: and the sight of it seems to have inspired either one or both of these conscienceless adventurers with the idea of lightening their load of furs, which consisted of above two thousand skins, though this cargo only represented about one-third of the number they had actually secured by cheating, robbery, and intrigue in the country of the Bay.

Having in this nefarious manner disposed of above one-half of La Chesnaye's and their own joint property, they again set sail and arrived at Quebec on the 26th of October.

Immediately on their arrival they went to report themselves to M. de la Barre, the Governor, La Chesnaye being fortunately, or unfortunately, absent

in Montreal. The Governor thought proper to return the *Susan* to the New England merchants, with a warning not to send her again to the region she had just quitted, and the Company's ill-starred Governor, Bridgar, together with young Gillam, sailed on board the *Susan* for New England.

"We parted," says Radisson with that matchless audacity of statement for which his narrative deserves to be famous, "on friendly terms; and he (Bridgar) could testify that I let him know at the time my attachment; and yet, that I wished still to act as heartily in the service of the King and the nation as I wished to do for France."

This hardly tallies with Bridgar's evidence before the Company, that Radisson was "a cheat, a swindler, and a black-hearted, infamous scoundrel," and that he was "a born intriguing traitor." As for the elder Gillam, he was heard to declare, when he had at length arrived on the frail and half-rotten craft which bore him and his unhappy comrades to New England, that he would not die happy until his "hangar had dipped into the blood of the French miscreant, Radisson."

Radisson and Groseilliers leave Quebec.

Quebec soon grew too hot for both the brothers-in-law. Between the unfortunate La Chesnaye, who saw himself two thousand crowns out of pocket, and the Governor, who had received orders from France to despatch to the Court this pair of adventurers who seemed bent on making

international trouble, Radisson and Groseilliers decided to leave Quebec, which they did in about a fortnight after their arrival.

The exact date of their departure was the 11th of November 1683. It was effected on board a French frigate which had brought troops to the colony. But though the captain of the frigate made all haste, the frail and shattered *St. Anne,* with Captain Gillam on board, arrived in Europe before them; and soon England was ringing with his story of the dastardly encroachment of the French into the realms of the Company at Port Nelson.[1]

[1] The material for the two last chapters has been derived chiefly from a pamphlet entitled "French Villainy in Hudson's Bay"; Radisson's own narrative; and the "Journal" of Gillam the elder, supplied to Dongan. Radisson's narrative, divided into two parts, is written in a clear, legible character, and evinces that its author was a person of some education. The first part is in English, and was long the property of Samuel Pepys. Some years after Pepys' death, the manuscript was purchased for a trifle by Rawlinson, the bibliophile. The second part, recounting the voyages to Hudson's Bay in 1682–84, is half in French and half in English; it is now in the Bodleian Library.

CHAPTER X

1683–1685

HAYS WRITES TO LORD PRESTON — GODEY SENT TO RADISSON'S LODGINGS — LA BARRE'S STRENUOUS EFFORTS — RADISSON RETURNS TO THE ENGLISH — HE LEAVES FOR THE BAY — MEETS HIS NEPHEW CHOUART — FORT BOURBON SURRENDERED TO THE COMPANY — RADISSON'S DRAMATIC RETURN TO LONDON.

LORD PRESTON, who, in the year 1683, held the post of Ambassador Extraordinary of King Charles II. at the Court of Versailles, was advised of the return to Paris of the bushranger Radisson in these terms:—

"My lord: It has just reached our ears and that of his Royal Highness the Duke of York, Governor of the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company, that the person who has caused all the recent trouble in the Hudson's Bay regions, whereby our merchants have suffered so much at the hands of the French, is at this moment in Paris. As it is much in the interests of the nation as of the Company that there should be no repetition of these encroachments and disturbances, it might be advantageous for your Lordship to see this Mr. Radisson, who, it is believed, could be brought over

Lord Preston informed of the return of Radisson and Groseilliers.

again to our service if he were so entreated by your Lordship. His Royal Highness, together with the other Honourable partners, are convinced from his previous conduct that it matters little to Mr. Radisson under whose standard he serves; and that, besides, he is secretly well-disposed toward us, and this in spite of his late treacherous exploits, which have given great offence to the nation and damage to the Company."

This private note was signed by Sir John Hays and Mr. Young on behalf of the Company. On its receipt by Lord Preston, he at once sent his attaché, Captain Godey, to seek out Radisson and make overtures to him. On the third floor of a house in the Faubourg St. Antoine, surrounded by a number of his relations and boon companions, the dual traitor was discovered, deeply engaged in drinking healths and in retailing his adventures to the applause of an appreciative circle. Upon the walls and mantelpiece of the apartment, and such meagre furniture as it boasted, were distributed numerous relics and trophies, bespeaking a thirty years' career in the Transatlantic wilderness.

"Radisson himself," remarks Godey, "was apparelled more like a savage than a Christian." His black hair, just touched with grey, hung in a wild profusion about his bare neck and shoulders. He showed a swart complexion, seamed and pitted by frost and exposure in a rigorous climate. A huge scar, wrought by the tomahawk of a drunken Indian, disfigured his left cheek. His whole costume was surmounted by a wide

collar of marten's skin; his feet were adorned by buckskin moccasins. In his leather belt was sheathed a long knife. Such was the picture presented by this uncouth, adventurous Huguenot, not merely in the seclusion of his own lodgings, but to the polished and civilised folk of Paris of the seventeenth century. What were the projects harboured in this indomitable man's mind? In spite of his persistent intrigues it is to be doubted if he, any more than Médard Chouart des Groseilliers, was animated by more than a desire to pursue an exciting and adventurous career. Habitually holding out for the best terms, he does not appear to have saved money when it was acquired, but spent it freely. When he died he was in receipt of a pension from the Company, so far insufficient to provide for his manner of living that they were forced to pay his remaining debts.

Radisson's appearance in Paris.

Unabashed by the surroundings thus presented to him, Captain Godey announced himself, shook hands with the utmost cordiality with Radisson, and pleaded to be allowed to join in the convivial proceedings then in progress. The better to evince his sincerity, without further ceremony he accepted and drank as full a bumper of bad brandy and applauded with as much heartiness as any man of the party, the truly astonishing tales of his host.

Godey was the last of the guests to depart.

"Look you," said he, when he and Radisson were

alone together, "you, monsieur, are a brave man, and it does not become the brave to harbour vengeance. Nor does it become a brave nation to think hardly of any man because of his bravery, even though that nation itself be a sufferer. You know," he pursued, "what is said about you in England?"

Radisson interrupted his guest by protesting with warmth that he neither knew nor cared anything about such a matter.

"It is said, then," answered Godey, "that you have been a traitor to the king, and that there is no authority or defence for your conduct. You and Groseilliers, whilst professing friendship for the English Company, have done them great injury, and endangered the peace between the two crowns."

"I am sorry," rejoined Radisson, "but all that I and my brother-in-law have done is to be laid at the door of the Hudson's Bay Company. We wished honestly to serve them, but they cast us away as being no longer useful, when now they see what it is they have done, and how foolishly they have acted in listening to the counsels of Governor Bridgar. We really bear them no ill-will, neither the Company nor his Royal Highness."[1]

[1] As an example of the absurd legends current some years later, and perpetuated, I am sorry to say, to a later day, it would be hard to match this, from La Potherie :—

"He (Preston) promised to Godet, one of his domestics, to create him perpetual secretary of the Embassy, providing he engaged Radisson in his party. Godet, the better to succeed, promised Radis-

The gallant emissary reported the tenour of this conversation forthwith to his master, and both were agreed as to the sort of man they had to deal with.

Godey's report.

Godey expressed himself convinced that there would be little difficulty in inducing Radisson to return to the Company's service. On this advice Preston at once wrote off to Mr. Young, telling him not to further press the Company's memorial to the King, nor to seek to have the French Court take cognisance of, and award recompense for, the wrongs done the English interests. "Radisson has done this thing out of his own head, and he is the one man competent to undo it. He is, I learn, well-disposed to the English, and there is no reason, if proper overtures be made him, why he should not do more for the English interests in that region than he has yet done."

At the same time La Barre, the French Governor, was urged to make the most strenuous efforts to retain the advantages won for the French by the adventurers. A royal despatch of August 5, 1683, and signed by Lewis himself, had already been sent, in these words:—

"I recommend you to prevent the English as much as possible from establishing themselves in

son his daughter in marriage, whom he (Radisson) espoused." (La Potherie, Vol. I., p. 145.) Godey was aide-de-camp to Preston; he may have had a daughter, but Radisson certainly did not espouse her, inasmuch as he was already married to Sir John Kirke's daughter, who was still living.

Hudson's Bay, possession whereof was taken in my name several years ago; and as Colonel d'Unguent,[1] appointed Governor of New York by the King of England, has had precise orders on the part of the said King to maintain good correspondence with us and carefully to avoid whatever may interrupt it, I doubt not the difficulties you have experienced will cease for the future."

Lewis was by no means desirous of rendering the position of his fellow-monarch over the Channel uncomfortable. He was disposed to yield in a small matter when he had his own way in most of the large ones. Had Charles yielded to French representations about Port Nelson he would have given great offence to his brother the Duke of York. Indeed, there is little doubt that had the Company not boasted members of such distinction, or the patronage of royalty, the French would have at this juncture forced their demands and overwhelmed the English possession. Radisson appears to have got wind of the situation, and this was, perhaps, to him a greater argument for returning to the service of the power most likely to be permanent in Hudson's Bay. He hung about idle in Paris for some weeks, however, in a state of indecision. Had M. de Seignely exerted his full powers of persuasion, he might have induced our bushranger to remain in the service of Lewis. But no such inducement was offered. There

[1] This is M. de la Barre's quaint fashion of spelling Dongan.

is some reason to believe that M. de Seignely undervalued Radisson; but in any case the apathy of the Court influenced his actions.

On the other hand, the bushranger was exhorted to return to his first engagement with the English, Lord Preston assuring him that if he could in reality execute what he proposed, he would receive in England from his Majesty, from his Royal Highness, from the Company, and from the nation, "every sort of good treatment and entire satisfaction." The Duke's especial protection was also guaranteed. Radisson, none too punctilious, at length made up his mind as to the course he would pursue.

"I yielded," says he, "to these solicitations, and determined to go to England for ever, and so strongly bind myself to his Majesty's service, and to that of those interested in the nation, that no other cause could ever detach me from it."

But in order that he might have an excuse for his conduct, the very day that he arrived at this decision he is found writing to the French Minister demanding a certain grant in the north-west of Canada as an alternative to a former proposal that 'in consideration of his discoveries, voyages, and services, he should be given every fourth beaver trapped or otherwise caught in those territories." M. de Seignely had no suspicion of the depth of Radisson's duplicity. The minister thought him "a vain man, much given to boasting, who could do much

Radisson decides to join the English.

harm, and had therefore best have his vanity tickled at home."

Up to the very eve of his departure, April 24, 1684, he was a daily attendant on the minister or his subordinates of the Department of Marine and Commerce. He was not always favoured with an audience; but when listened to spoke vaguely of fitting out and equipping vessels for trade on voyages similar to those he had already undertaken. His *naïveté*, to use no harsher term, is amusing.

"In order," says he, "that they should not suspect anything by my sudden absence, I told them I was obliged to take a short trip into the country on friendly family matters. *I myself made good use of this time to go to London.*"

He arrived in the English capital on the 10th of May, and immediately paid his respects to Mr. Young. The project for regaining possession of York Factory was canvassed. Radisson estimated that there would be between fifteen and twenty thousand beaver skins in the hands of his nephew, awaiting shipment. The partners appeared more than satisfied, and Radisson met with a most cordial reception. He was assured that the Company had entire confidence in him, and that their greatest regret was that there had been any misunderstanding between them. They would, it was declared on their behalf, make all amends in their power.

For a few weeks the Hudson's Bay bushranger found

himself lionised. He was presented to the King in the course of a *levee*. Charles listened with the greatest assumption of interest to the adventurer's account of himself, and to his asseverations of loyalty and good-will. Radisson in the evening was taken to the play-house in the suite of his Royal Highness, and there by his bizarre attire attracted almost as much attention amongst the audience as the play itself.

"To the Duke's Play-house," writes John Selwyn to his wife, "where Radisson, the American fur-hunter, was in the Royal box. Never was such a combination of French, English, and Indian savage as Sir John Kirke's son-in-law. He was not wont to dress so when he was last here, but he has got him a new coat with much lace upon it, which he wears with his leather breeches and shoes. His hair is a perfect tangle. It is said he has made an excellent fortune for himself."

After a number of conferences with the partners, Radisson finally departed from Gravesend on May 17. Three ships set sail, that in which Radisson was embarked being named the *Happy Return*. The elements being favourable, the little fleet reached the Straits more speedily than usual. The chief figure of this expedition, who had never borne a part in any joint enterprise without being animated by jealousy and distrust, found here ample scope for the exercise of his characteristic vices. During nearly the entire period of the voyage he evinced a perpetual and painful apprehension

Radisson's departure for Hudson's Bay.

that one of the other ships carrying officials and servants of the Company would, with malicious intent, arrive before him.

His first concern on awaking in the morning was to be assured that the companion vessels were in sight, and although the *Happy Return* was the most sluggish sailor of the trio, yet to such good purpose were plied the bushranger's energies and promises that her commander's seamanship made her a capital match for the others.

But just before their destination was reached, contrary winds, currents and masses of floating ice brought about a separation, and Radisson began to be assailed more than ever by the fear that the English servants would arrive on the ground, overwhelm his nephew and the other French without his assistance, and thus frustrate all his plans for claiming sole credit. And in truth this fear was very nearly justified. Twenty leagues from Port Nelson the ship became blocked amidst the masses of ice, and progress, except at a raft's pace, was out of the question. In this dilemma, Radisson demanded of the captain a small boat and seven men. His request being granted, it was launched, and after undergoing forty-eight hours' fatigue, without rest or sleep, the entrance to Nelson River was reached. Imagine Radisson's surprise, as well as that of his companions, on beholding two ships at anchor, upon one of which, a complete stranger to them, floated the Royal Standard of England.

It was the English frigate which had entered at Port Nelson. The other ship was the *Alert*, commanded by Captain Outlaw, having brought out the Company's new Governor, William Phipps, the previous season. Radisson boldly headed his boat for this vessel, and when he drew near, perceived Bridgar's successor, with all his people in arms, on the quarter-deck. The Governor, in a loud voice, instantly demanded to know who Radisson was. Upon his making himself and his allegiance known, they decided to permit him to board the Company's ship. The bushranger first made it his care to be informed how matters stood, and was inwardly rejoiced to learn that the Governor and his men had not dared to land, out of fear for the French and Indians, who were considered hostile to the English interests. This was precisely the situation Radisson most desired; a thought seems to have struck him that, after all, his nephew, Chouart, might prove intractable, and by no means so easily won over as he had anticipated. It therefore behoved him to act with adroitness.

Taking with him two men, therefore, Radisson proceeded up country in the direction of the abandoned York Factory, hourly hoping that they might discover something, or see a friendly Indian, or that they should make some one hear, by firing musket shots or making a smoke. The attempt was not fruitless, as he tells us, for after a while they perceived ten canoes with Indians coming down the

river. "At first," he says, "I thought some Frenchmen might be with them, whom my nephew might have sent to discover who the new arrivals were." Upon this supposition Radisson severed himself from his comrades, and going to meet the savages he made the usual signs to them from the bank, which the Indians at first seemed to respond to in no amiable spirit. Albeit, on addressing them in their own tongue, he was immediately recognised, the Indians testifying by shouts and playful postures to their joy at his arrival. He quickly learned from them that his nephew and the other Frenchmen were above the rapids, four leagues from the place where they then were. They had expected Groseilliers would accompany Radisson, and when they expressed surprise that this was not the case, Radisson did not scruple to tell them that Groseilliers awaited him at a short distance.

The presence of the French made known.

"But what," asked Radisson, "are you doing here? What brings you into this part of the country and in such numbers?"

The savage leader's sudden confusion betrayed him to Radisson. The fact of the Indians having voluntarily sought trade with the English greatly simplified the situation.

"Look you," he cried heartily, at the same time calling to Captain Geyer, who was in ambush hard by, "I am glad to find you seeking trade with the English. I have made peace with the English for

the love of our Indian brothers; you, they, and I are to be henceforth only one. Embrace us, therefore, in token of peace; this (pointing to Geyer) is your new brother. Go immediately to your son at the fort yonder and carry him these tidings and the proofs of peace. Tell him to come and see me at this place, while the others will wait for me at the mouth of the river."

It may be mentioned that the chief of this band had previously announced himself as young Chouart's sire, according to the Indian custom. He now readily departed on his mission.

Radisson passed an anxious night. The sun had been risen some hours before his eyes were gladdened by the sight of a canoe, in which he descried Chouart. The young man's countenance bore, as well it might, an expression of profound amazement; and at first hardly the bare civilities of relationship passed between the pair. Chouart waited patiently for his uncle to render an explanation of the news which had reached him. Silently and slowly they walked together, and after a time the prince of liars, traitors, adventurers, and bushrangers began his account of his position.

Radisson states that his nephew immediately acquiesced in his scheme. A memoir penned in 1702, the year of Radisson's death, by M. Barthier, of Quebec, asserts that the young man received with the utmost disgust, and flatly declined to entertain his relative's proposals. He expressed, on the other

hand, the greatest grief on hearing the news; for he had begun to believe that it was through their efforts that the dominion of the King had been extended in that region. Now it appeared that this labour had all been in vain. It was only his love for his mother, Radisson's sister, which prevented an open rebellion on the part of Chouart against the proposed treachery.

No rupture took place; the stronger and more crafty spirit prevailed. Chouart surrendered on the following day his command of the fort. He had, he complained, expected a far different fate for the place and his men. The tattered old *fleur de lis* standard brought by the *St. Anne's* captain from Quebec was lowered and the English emblem, with the device of the Company, run up in its stead. All the forces were assembled, and amidst cheers for King Charles and the Honourable Adventurers, the Company's Governor took formal possession.

Chouart surrenders to Radisson.

But the French bushrangers and sailors watched these proceedings with melancholy dissatisfaction, not, perhaps, as much from patriotic motives as from the frailty of their own tenure. They could no longer be assured of a livelihood amongst so many English, bearing themselves with so haughty a mien.

Radisson proceeded to make an inventory of all the skins on hand, together with all those concealed in *caches* in the woods. The results showed 239 packages of beaver, or about 12,000 skins, together

with merchandise sufficient to barter for seven or eight thousand more. Instructions were now given by Radisson, the Governor remaining passive, to have all these goods taken in canoes to the ships.

It now only remained for the bushranger to accomplish one other object before setting sail with the cargo for England. Radisson speaks of himself as having a secret commission, but no authority can be found for his statement. It involved the retention in the Company's service of his nephew and the other Frenchmen; but even assuming that Radisson were armed with any such instructions, the plan was not likely to enjoy the approval of Governor Phipps, who, if he were at the outset of his term of office determined upon any one thing, it was that Fort Nelson should be cleared of Frenchmen. Exactly how this was to be arranged was not quite clear, especially as there was yet no open rupture between the two authorities. But for such a rupture they had not long to wait. They were destined on the very eve of his departure to be involved in a quarrel.

Some years before an Assiniboine chief named Ka-chou-touay had taken Radisson to his bosom and adopted him as his son with all the customary ceremonies. This formidable chief, who had been at war with a neighbouring tribe at the time of his adopted son's arrival in the country, now put in an appearance, and instead of the joy Radisson expected he was greeted with reproaches. For Ka-chou-touay informed

him that a brother chief of his, named La Barbé, with one of his sons, had been killed while expostulating with a party of English. The consequences of this rash action might be so grave that Radisson felt it to be his duty to resort to the Governor and demand that his servants should be punished for the crime, or else he would not be answerable for the consequences. The Governor does not appear to have taken Radisson's demand in good part, declining altogether to intervene in the matter. Radisson soon proceeded to commands and threats. He asserted that as long as he remained in the country the Governor was his subordinate, which greatly angered that official, and high words passed.

Dispute between Radisson and the Governor.

The task the Governor had set himself was by no means easy, especially if he wished to avoid bloodshed. But the plan of overpowering and disarming the French was finally accomplished through strategy, and all were escorted aboard the ship, even to Chouart himself. On the 4th of September sail was set.

On this voyage Radisson's state of mind rivalled that which he had experienced when outward bound. His late anxiety to be the first upon the scene at Port Nelson was paralleled now by his desire to be the first in London. If, happily, the Company should first hear an account of what had transpired from himself, he felt convinced full measure of justice would be done him. If, on the other hand, Governor Phipps's relation

were first received, there was no knowing how much prejudice might be raised against him.

Great as was his impatience, he managed to hide it with adroitness, so that none save his nephew suspected the intention he shortly executed. The captain, crew, and Company's servants left the ship leisurely at Portsmouth, those going up to London lingering on for the coach. As for Pierre Radisson, he instantly made his way to the post-house, where he hired a second-rate steed, mounted it, and, without the courtesy of an adieu to his late comrades, broke into a gallop, hardly restrained until London Bridge was reached.

His entry was made close upon midnight, but late as was the hour, Radisson took no thought of securing lodging or of apprising his family. He spurred on his stumbling horse to the dwelling of Mr. Young, in Wood Street, Cheapside. The Honourable Adventurer had retired for the night, but, nevertheless, in gown and night-cap he welcomed Radisson with great cordiality. He listened, we are told, with the greatest interest and satisfaction to the bushranger's tale, garnished with details of his own marvellous prowess and zeal for the Company. Nor, perhaps, was Radisson less satisfied when, on attaining his own lodging, he pondered on the day's exploits. He slumbered little, and at eleven o'clock Young was announced, and was ushered in, declaring that he had already been to Whitehall and apprised the Court of the good news.

His Majesty and his Royal Highness had expressed a wish to see Radisson, the hero of these great doings, and Young was accordingly brought to escort the bushranger into the Royal presence. It was a triumph, but a short-lived one. Radisson had hardly left the precincts of the Court, his ears still ringing with the praises of King and courtiers, when the Deputy-Governor, Mr. Dering, received Phipps's account of the affair, which was almost as unfair to Radisson and the part he had played in the re-capture of Port Nelson, as Radisson's own account was flattering.

Phipps's letter to the Company.

On the receipt of the report, a General Court of the Adventurers was held on September 26th. By the majority of members the bushranger was hardly likely to be accorded full justice, for great offence had been given by his presentation at Court and the extremely informal manner of his arrival. Despite the friendliness of Hays, Young, and several other partners, Radisson was not again granted a position of authority in the Company's service.

In the meanwhile young Chouart, being detained in England against his wish, decided to write to Denonville and propose to accompany his uncle to Port Nelson and make his escape and gain Quebec by land. The Governor forwarded this letter to Paris and demanded permission to promise fifty pistoles to those who would seize the traitor Radisson and bring him to Quebec. The minister complied. But in

March, 1687, he had had no success. "The misfortune," says the minister, "that the man Radisson has done to the colony, and that he is still capable of doing if he remains longer amongst the English, should oblige Denonville and Champagne to make every effort to seize him, and so judgment will be held out." Radisson did, it is true, make another voyage to Hudson's Bay, but his sojourn was of brief duration, and a plot set on foot to seize him failed.

Not long afterwards, "Peter Raddison" is found to be in receipt of a pension of ten pounds a month from the Company, which he continued to enjoy for many years to the time of his death at Islington, in 1702.

Thus perished one of the most extraordinary characters of the early fur-trade. He had survived his old comrade and brother-in-law, Groseilliers (about the exact date of whose death is some uncertainty), more than ten years.

CHAPTER XI

1685–1686

Feigned anger of Lewis—He writes to La Barre—Importance attached to Indian Treaties—Duluth's zeal—Gauthier de Comportier—Denonville made Governor—Capture of the "Merchant of Perpetuana"—Expedition of Troyes against the Company's Posts in the Bay—Moose Fort surrendered.

When the news of the expedition of 1684 reached the Court of Versailles, Lewis professed anger that the peace between the two crowns should be broken even in that remote corner of the world. He related the discussion which had taken place between the English ambassador and himself with regard to Radisson's treachery. He had been happy, he said, to inform King Charles's representative that he was unwilling to afford his "brother of England" any cause of complaint. Nevertheless, as he thought it important to prevent the English from establishing themselves in that river, it would be well to make a proposal to the commandant at Hudson's Bay that neither French nor English should have power to make any new establishments.

Long before that he had written to Governor La

Barre, in no measured terms, demanding of him what he meant by releasing the Boston vessel, the *Susan*, without calling on the intendant, or consulting the sovereign council.

"You have herein done," said he, "just what the English would be able to make a handle of, since in virtue of your ordinance you caused a vessel to be surrendered which ought strictly to be considered a pirate, as it had no commission; and the English will not fail to say that you so fully recognised the regularity of the ship's papers as to surrender it."

Simultaneously with the receipt of this letter from his monarch, there came to the perplexed Governor a letter from the Sieur Duluth, stating that at great expense of presents he had prevented the western tribes from further carrying their beaver trade to the English. He had, it appeared, met the Sieur de la Croix with his two comrades, who had presented the despatches in which the Governor had urged him to use every endeavour in forwarding letters to Chouart, at Nelson River.

Duluth in the West.

"To carry out your instructions," wrote Duluth, "there was only Monsieur Péré, who would have to go himself, the savages having all at that time withdrawn into the interior." He added that Péré had left during the previous month, and doubtless at that time had accomplished his mission. Duluth invariably expressed himself with great confidence on the subject of the implicit trust which the savages reposed in

him. More than once in his letters, as well as in verbal messages forwarded to his superiors, he boasted that before a couple of years were out not a single savage would visit the English at Hudson's Bay. To this end they had bound themselves by the numerous presents they had received at his hands; and he was assured that they would not go back on their word.

As with Duluth so with the other officials, pioneers, and emissaries amongst the French, great importance was attached to treaties and compacts with the aborigines. Every endeavour was made to obtain the goodwill and amity of the Indians.

Perhaps nothing exhibits so powerfully the totally differing attitude and motives of the Company, compared with the French traders, than the manner in which, in those early times, the Red man was trusted and believed by the one and distrusted and contemned by the other. One may peruse neither the narratives of the Jesuits nor of the traders without an emotion of awe at the simple faith of those pioneers in the honesty and probity of the Red men. To the very end, when disaster succeeding disaster overwhelmed the propaganda of Loyola amongst the northern tribes and exterminated its disciples, we read of the Frenchman trusting to the word and deferring to the prejudices of his Indian brother. It was as if the latter were indeed of a common steadfastness and moral nature with his own. Contrast this attitude with that trait in

French and English relations with the Indians.

the English character which is still exhibited in his dealings with inferior and black peoples in India and Africa, at the present day. Never was the contrast greater than during the acute conflict of English and French interests in Hudson's Bay at this time. The early governors and traders almost without exception openly despised the Indian and secretly derided his most solemn counsels. August treaties were set aside on the most flimsy pretexts, and if the virtues of the savages were too highly esteemed by the French, they were on the other hand perhaps much too cheaply held by their rivals.

But to whatever extent they may have held themselves bound by compacts of this kind, the Company's officials were not so foolish as to doubt their potency amongst savages. Thus we find that from the years 1682 to 1688 the Company regularly instructed its servants to enact the strongest treaties with the "captains and kings of the rivers and territories where they had settlements." "These compacts," observes one of the Company's servants, "were rendered as firm and binding as the Indians themselves could make them. Ceremonies of the most solemn and sacred character accompanied them."

Duluth had already built a fort near the River à la Maune, at the bottom of Lake Nepigon, and thither he expected at least six of the northern nations to resort in the spring. Lest this should not be sufficient for the purpose, he designed building another in the

Christineaux River, which would offer an effectual barrier to the expansion of the English trade. With characteristic zeal Duluth, in a letter written at this time, concluded with these words:

"Finally, sir, I wish to lose my life if I do not absolutely prevent the savages from visiting the English."

But with every good will to serve his monarch and stifle in infancy the growing trade of the Hudson's Bay Company in the northern regions, Duluth vastly undervalued the forces of circumstance as well of enterprise at the command of the enemy. The plans of the French were destined to be confounded by the unforeseen and treacherous action of Radisson and Chouart in the following year.

"What am I to do?" now became the burden of La Barre's appeals to the King. The young priest who acted as his secretary at Quebec was kept perpetually writing to Versailles for instructions. His letters are long, and filled with explanations of the situation, which only served to confuse his superiors. Fearful of offending the English on one hand and thereby precipitating New France in a war with New England, and on the other of arousing the resentment of the colonists by a supine behaviour, the unhappy La Barre was in an unpleasant dilemma.

"Am I to oppose force to force?" he asks in one letter. "Am I to venture against those who have committed these outrages against your Majesty's sub-

jects at sea? It is a matter in which your Majesty will please to furnish me with some precise and decisive orders whereunto I shall conform my conduct and actions."

But the Most Christian King was by no means anxious to quarrel with his cousin Charles either for the dominion of, or the fur-trade monopoly in, the North. Charles was in possession of a handsome subsidy paid out of the exchequer of Lewis. Europe was spectator of the most cordial relations between these two monarchs, relations which are described by more than one candid historian as those commonly subsisting between master and vassal. That tempest of indignation which was to break over England in the reign of Charles's successor would have not so long been deferred had but a real knowledge of the "good understanding and national concord" been known to Englishmen at large.

Lewis unwilling to oppose the English.

Under the circumstances it is not surprising that Lewis concluded to do nothing. It was not that opportunities to regain what was lost were lacking. An old soldier, Gauthier de Comportier, who with a number of other patriots had learned of the jeopardy in which French interests lay in the North, presented a memoir to the King offering, if a grant were made him, to win all back from the English and to establish three posts on the Bourbon River. The grant was refused.

A change then came which altered the aspect of affairs.

In February, 1685, Charles II. died, and the Duke of York, second Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, ascended the throne of England. Lewis was not the last to perceive that the accession of James would cause but little real difference, as the latter and himself were bound together by ties as strong as had bound Charles, yet saw at the same time that full advantage might safely be reaped from the change of monarchs. Proceedings were instantly set on foot therefore to retrieve the fortunes of the French in the fur countries.

The conduct of Groseilliers and Radisson had deeply offended the inhabitants of Quebec. An excited populace burnt the pair in effigy, and a decree was issued for their arrest should they at any time be apprehended, and for their delivery to those whom they had betrayed. But it was the anger of La Chesnaye and his associates of the Company which was especially strong. A new expedition which they had sent out to Port Nelson, with the intention of collecting a wealth of peltries, returned to the St. Lawrence without so much as a single beaver.

The success of the English made some decided action on the part of the French inevitable. La Barre was recalled, and his successor, the Marquis de Denonville, determined to take matters into his own hands rather than see the interests of New France in the Bay suffer. He relied upon the success of the expedition to atone

for the boldness of the initiative, but his action was not taken without repeated warnings addressed to the Minister. "All the best of our furs, both as to quality and quantity, we must expect to see shortly in the hands of the English." If the English were not expelled they would secure all the fat beaver from an infinite number of tribes in the north who were being discovered every day, besides abstracting the greater portion of the peltries that ordinarily reached them at Montreal through the Ottawas, Assiniboines, and other tribes.[1]

In the month of July, 1685, two ships belonging to the French Company, returning in disappointment to Canada from Port Nelson, met, at the mouth of the Straits, one of the Hudson's Bay Company's vessels, the *Merchant of Perpetuana*, commanded by Edward Humes. This ship was bound for York Fort with a cargo of merchandise and provisions, and no time was lost on the part of the French in intercepting her. Captain Humes not surrendering with sufficient alacrity to please the enemy, the *Merchant of Perpetuana* was boarded and forcibly possessed in the name of King Lewis.

The French capture a Company's ship.

[1] "Our Frenchmen have seen quite recently from Port Nelson some Indians who were known to have traded several years ago at Montreal. The posts at the head of the Bay Abbitibi and Nemisco can be reached through the woods and seas; our Frenchmen are acquainted with the road. But in regard to the posts occupied by the English in the river Bourbon or Port Nelson it is impossible to hold any posts below them and convey merchandise thither except by sea. Some pretend that it is feasible to go thence overland; but the river to reach that quarter

Several English sailors lost their lives. The vessel having been seized in this manner, her prow was headed for Quebec, where master and crew were summarily cast into gaol.

After a miserable confinement, lasting eleven months, the sufferings of Captain Humes ended with his death, and the other prisoners, exposed to the insults and indignities of the Quebec populace, were ultimately sent away to Martinique on board their own ship, and there sold as slaves. The mate, Richard Smithsend by name, managed to escape, and upon reaching London, the tale he unfolded to his employers excited general indignation. A memorial of the outrage, couched in vigorous language, was presented to the King, but James, resolved not to give offence to his friend and ally the Most Christian King, took no notice of the matter.

remains yet to be discovered, and when discovered could only admit the conveyance of a few men and not of any merchandise. In regard to Hudson's Bay, should the King not think proper for enforcing the reasons his Majesty has for opposing the usurpation of the English on his lands, by the just titles proving his Majesty's possession long before the English had any knowledge of the country, nothing is to be done but to find means to support the Company of the said Bay, formed in Canada, by the privilege his Majesty has been pleased this year to grant to all his subjects of New France; and to furnish them for some years with a few vessels of 120 tons, well armed and equipped. I hope with this aid our Canadians will support this business, which will otherwise perish of itself; whilst the English merchants, more powerful than our Canadians, will with good ships continue their trade, whereby they will enrich themselves at the expense of the Colony and the King's revenue."—Despatch of Denonville, 12th November 1685.

Amongst the French in Canada there were not wanting bold spirits to follow up this daring stroke. Chief amongst them, not merely for the character of his achievements, but for his uncommon and romantic personality, was the Chevalier de Troyes. This Canadian nobleman, much advanced in years, was a retired captain in the army. He believed he now saw an opportunity to win a lasting distinction, and to rival, and perhaps surpass, the exploits of Champlain, Lusson, Frontenac, and the other hero-pioneers of New France. Scholarly in his tastes, and frail of body, though by profession a soldier, he emerged from privacy on Christmas Eve, 1685, and asked of the Governor a commission to drive the English utterly from the Northern Bay.

The authority the old soldier sought for was granted. He was empowered to "search for, seize, and occupy the most advantageous posts, to seize the robbers, bushrangers, and others whom we know to have taken and arrested several of our French engaged in the Indian trade, whom we order him to arrest, especially the said Radisson and his adherents wherever they may be found, and bring them to be punished as deserters, according to the rigour of the ordinances." The rigour of the ordinances was death.

Fourscore Canadians were selected to form part of the expedition against the Hudson's Bay Company's posts by the Chevalier de Troyes. For his lieutenants, the leader chose the three sons of a nobleman of New

France named Charles Le Moine. One, the eldest, a young man of only twenty-five, was to bear an enduring distinction in the annals of France as one of her most able and intrepid naval commanders. This was the Sieur d'Iberville. His brothers, taking their names, as he had done, from places in their native land, were called the Sieurs de Sainte Hélène and de Marincourt. Thirty soldiers were directly attached to the Chevalier's command, veterans who had, almost to a man, seen service in one or other of the great European wars. That they might not be without the ministrations of religion, Father Sylvie, a Jesuit priest, accompanied the expedition.

"The rivers," writes a chronicler of the Troyes expedition, "were frozen and the earth covered with snow when that small party of vigorous men left Montreal in order to ascend the Ottawa River as far as the height of land and thence to go down to James' Bay." At the beginning of April they arrived at the Long Sault, where they prepared some canoes in order to ascend the Ottawa River. From Lake Temiscamingue they passed many portages until they reached Lake Abbitibi, at the entrance or most southern extremity of which they built a small fort of stockades. After a short halt they continued their course towards James' Bay.

Expedition of de Troyes.

The establishment first doomed to conquest by Troyes and his companions was Moose Factory, a stockade fort having four bastions covered with earth.

In the centre was a house forty feet square and as many high, terminating in a platform. The fort was escaladed by the French late at night, and the palisades made short work of by the hatchets of their bush-rangers.

Amongst the garrison none appears to have attempted a decent defence save the chief gunner, who perished bravely at his post of duty.[1] A cry for quarter went up, and the English were made prisoners on the spot. They were sixteen in number, and as the attack was made at night they were in a state of almost complete undress. Troyes found in the fort twelve cannon, chiefly six and eight-pounders, three thousand pounds of powder, and ten pounds of lead.

It is worthy of record that the capture was effected with an amount of pomp and ceremony calculated to strike the deepest awe into the hearts of those fifteen unhappy and not too intelligent Company's apprentices, who knew nothing of fighting nor had bargained for anything so perilous. For so small a conquest it was both preceded and followed by almost as much circumstance as would have sufficed for the Grand Monarque himself in one of his theatrical sieges. The Chevalier announced in a loud voice that he took possession of the fort and island "in the name of his Most Christian Majesty the Most High, Most Mighty, Most Redoubtable Monarch Lewis XIV. of the Most Christian Name, King of

Capture of Moose Factory.

[1] Iberville declares that he split the gunner's head into fragments.

France and Navarre." In obvious imitation of Lusson, a sod of earth was thrice raised in the air, whilst a cry of "Vive le Roi" rang out over those waters wherein were sepultured the bodies of Henry Hudson and his men.

CHAPTER XII

1686–1689

THE FRENCH ATTACK UPON FORT RUPERT—GOVERNOR SARGEANT APPRISED — INTREPIDITY OF NIXON — CAPTURE OF FORT ALBANY — DISASTER TO THE "CHURCHILL" — THE COMPANY HEARS THE ILL NEWS—NEGOTIATIONS FOR COLONIAL NEUTRALITY—DESTRUCTION OF NEW SEVERN FORT—LOSS OF THE "HAMPSHIRE"—THE REVOLUTION.

UNDECIDED whether next to attack Fort Rupert or Fort Albany, the Chevalier de Troyes was prompted to a decision through learning that a boat containing provisions had left Moose Factory on the previous day bound for Rupert's River. Iberville was therefore sent with nine men and two bark canoes to attack a sloop belonging to the Company then lying at anchor at the mouth of the latter river with fourteen souls aboard, including the Governor. To accomplish this stroke it was necessary to travel forty leagues along the sea coast. The road was extremely difficult and in places almost impassable. A shallop was constructed to carry a couple of small cannon, and on the 25th of June Troyes left for Fort Rupert.

St. Hélène was sent on in advance to reconnoitre the establishment. He returned with the information

that it was a square structure, flanked by four bastions, but that all was in a state of confusion owing to repairs and additions then being made to the fort. The cannon had not yet been placed, being temporarily accommodated outside on the slope of a redoubt.

Before the attack, which could only have one issue, was made by the land forces, Iberville had boarded the Company's sloop, surprised captain and crew, and made all, including Governor Bridgar, prisoners. Four of the English were killed.

After this exploit Iberville came ashore, rejoined his superior, and overpowered the almost defenceless garrison of Fort Rupert.

The French forces now united, and St. Hélène having been as successful as his brother in securing the second of the Company's ships, all embarked and sailed for the remaining post of the Company in that part of the Bay.

Neither Troyes nor Iberville knew its precise situation; but a little reconnoitring soon discovered it. Fort Albany was built in a sheltered inlet forty yards from the borders of the Bay. Two miles to the north-east was an *estrapade*, on the summit of which was placed a seat for a sentinel to sight the ships expected from England and to signal them if all was well. But on this morning, unhappily, no sentinel was there to greet with a waving flag the Company's ship, on the deck of which stood young Iberville.

A couple of Indians brought Governor Sargeant

SAMUEL HEARNE

From a print published in 1796

tidings of the approach of the enemy, and his previous successes at Moose and Rupert rivers. The Governor immediately resolved upon making a bold stand; all was instantly got in readiness to sustain a siege, and the men were encouraged to behave with fortitude. Two hours later the booming of cannon was heard, and soon afterwards a couple of skirmishers were sighted at a distance. Despite the Commander's example, the servants at the fort were thrown into the greatest confusion. Two of their number were deputed by the rest to inform the Governor that they were by no means disposed to sacrifice their lives unless provision were made, in case of a serious issue, for themselves and families. They were prevailed upon by the Governor to return to their posts, and in return for this obedience a bounty was promised them. Bombardment by the French then commenced, and lasted for two days, being occasionally replied to by the English. But it was not until the evening of the second day that the first fatality occurred, when one of the servants was killed, and a mutiny precipitated. Elias Turner, the chief gunner, declared to his comrades that it was impossible for the Governor to hold the place, and that, for his part, he was ready to throw himself on the clemency of the enemy. Sargeant, overhearing this declaration, drew his pistol and threatened to blow out the gunner's brains if he did not return to his post, a form of persuasion which proved highly effec-

Attack on Fort Albany.

tive. Profiting by the darkness the French brought their cannon through the wood closer to the fort; and by daybreak a series of heavy balls struck the bastions, causing a breach. Sargeant and Captain Outlaw (who was then at Fort Albany) were convinced that the enemy was undermining the powder magazine, in which case they would certainly be blown up.

The French from the ship had thrown up a battery, which was separated from the moat surrounding the fort by less than a musket shot; and none amongst the beleagured English ventured to show himself above ground at a moment of such peril. A shell exploded at the head of the stairway and wounded the cook. The cries of the French could be distinctly heard outside the fort—"Vive le Roi, vive le Roi!" In their fright and despair the English echoed the cry "Vive le Roi," thinking thereby to propitiate their aggressors. But the latter mistook the cry for one of defiance, as a token of loyalty to an altogether different monarch, and the bullets whistled faster and thicker. Sargeant desired to lower the flag floating above his own dwelling, but there was none to undertake so hazardous a task. Finally Nixon, the under-factor, offered to show himself and allay the fury of the French. He first thrust a white cloth from a window and waved a lighted torch before it. He then called in a loud voice, and the firing instantly ceased. The under-factor came forth, fully dressed, and bearing two huge

flagons of port wine. Walking beyond the parapets he encountered both Troyes and Iberville, and by the light of a full moon the little party of French officers and the solitary Englishman sat down on the mounted cannon, or on the ground beside it, broached the two flagons and drank the health of both kings, their respective masters.

"And now, gentlemen," said Nixon, "what is it you want?"

"Possession of your fort," was the answer, "in the name of his Most Christian Majesty, King Lewis XIV."

Nixon, explaining that he was not master there, offered to convey this message to Sargeant. In a very short time the French commanders were seated comfortably within the house of the Governor. The demand was again preferred, it being added that great offence had been given by the action of the English in taking captive three French traders the previous autumn, and keeping them prisoners on ground owned and ruled by the King of France. For this reason reparation was demanded, and Sargeant was desired at once to surrender the fort. The Governor was surprised at such extreme measures, for which he was totally unprepared, but was willing to surrender upon terms of capitulation. On the following morning the desired terms were arranged.

It was agreed that Sargeant should continue to enjoy all his personal effects; and further, that his deputy, Nixon, three domestics, and his servant, should

accompany him out of the fort. It was also agreed that Troyes should send the clerks and servants of the Company to Charlton Island, there to await the arrival of the Company's ships from England. In case of their non-arrival within a reasonable time, Troyes promised to assist them to such vessel as he could command for the purpose. The Frenchmen also gave Sargeant the provisions necessary to keep him and his companions from starvation. All quitted the fort without arms, save Sargeant and his son, whose swords and pistols hung at their sides. The Governor and his suite were provided with passage to Hays Island, where he afterwards made his escape to Port Nelson. The others were distributed between Forts Moose and Albany, and were treated with considerable severity and hardship.

Capitulation of the fort.

Having attended to the disposition of his prisoners and their property, Troyes, accompanied by Iberville, departed on 10th August for Montreal. The gallant Chevalier and his associates would have been glad to have pursued their successes, by crossing the Bay and capturing Port Nelson. But although two ships belonging to the Company had fallen to their lot, yet they could find none competent to command them. The distance between Albany and Port Nelson was by water two hundred and fifty leagues, and the road overland was as yet unknown to the French. But it was not their purpose that it should long remain so. In a letter to his official superior at Quebec, Denon-

ville, pursuing his way amongst the tribes of the Upper Mississippi region, boasted that the next year would not pass without their becoming acquainted with it.

Wherefore Troyes suffered himself to be prevailed upon by Iberville, and be content with the victories already won. They carried with them in their journey more than 50,000 beaver as a trophy of their arms. Many of the Hudson's Bay Company's servants were employed in bearing the spoils. Along the dreary march several of these unhappy captives were killed through the connivance of the French with the Indians; and the survivors reached Quebec in a wretchedly emaciated and halt condition.

Troyes' victories were ludicrously exaggerated: his return to Quebec, in consequence, was attended with much pomp.

Wholly ignorant of Troyes and his proceedings in the Bay, the Company sent out its annual expedition as usual in 1687. In the autumn of this year the *Churchill* was caught in the ice near Charlton Island. Iberville being quickly apprised of this mishap, sent a party of four across the ice to reconnoitre. They appear to have been somewhat careless, for, while one sank down from utter exhaustion, the others were surprised by the Company's crew, seized, and bound. One of the three, however, managed to escape the fate of his companions, who were manacled and placed in the bottom of the ship's hold, where they passed the winter.

French prisoners taken by the *Churchill*.

But the French captives enjoyed no monopoly of misfortune. The captain of the ship, while hunting on the island in the early days of spring, lost his life by drowning; and there were numerous minor calamities. In May, preparation was made for departure, and as the English were short-handed the two prisoners were forced to lend their aid. This they did willingly, glad to exchange the ship's fetid atmosphere for the open air of heaven. One day, while most of the crew were aloft, one of the Frenchmen, perceiving only two of his captors on deck, furtively secured an axe, with which implement he silently split the skulls of both men, and then ran to release his comrade, temporarily chained below. The pair seized fire-arms which they came upon in a corner of the hold, and brandishing these in skilful fashion, changed suddenly from captives into masters. In opprobrious terms and with violent gesticulations they dared the crew to come down from the rigging, or indeed to lay a hand upon the fringe of a shroud; and while one watched with two drawn pistols in hand the shivering seamen in the shrouds and rigging, the other steered the ship towards Rupert's River. How long this drama might have lasted it is hard to say, for within a few hours Iberville and his ship hove in sight. He had fitted out an expedition to rescue his men as soon as the ice would permit, and now came and took charge of the *Churchill* and all on board.

The tidings of the expedition of the Chevalier de

Troyes, following close upon the harrowing tale of Smithsend, the mate of the *Merchant of Perpetuana*, excited the Adventurers to a pitch of fury. An extraordinary general meeting was held, and London was placarded with an account of the outrages. A news-letter was issued at the Company's expense detailing the events, and carrying them into the remotest parts of the kingdom. Lord Churchill, who had succeeded King James in the governorship of the Company, personally presented a petition of the outraged Adventurers to the King, wherein it was prayed "that James would be pleased to afford them his Royal assistance and Protection and that Your Majesty will demand and procure satisfaction to be made them for all losses and damages they have suffered as well formerly as by this last invasion."

News of the disaster reaches England.

It will assist a comprehension of the situation to allude to what had been happening between the two crowns from 1685 to 1688.

In the first-named year, in response to the pressure brought to bear upon both by their subjects, James had agreed with Lewis to appoint a joint commission to examine into the disputes between the two nations and, if possible, effect a pacific settlement.

Their respective possessions in America were giving both powers so much trouble and expense that they were ready to welcome any arrangement which would reduce the burden. War between England and France in the old days had been a simple matter, confined

to contiguous territory of whose geography and physical features they knew something. But now the mother countries could not offer each other hostilities without a score or so of their offspring colonies springing at each other's throats.

If war between France and England could only be confined to war between those two countries, and not be allowed to spread itself over innumerable savage tribes and dependencies in North America, it was felt that a great end would thereby be gained.

The point sought by both kings was to make North America neutral. Such a thing would have been excellent, had it but been possible. But the futility of such an arrangement was instantly made manifest. Both races in North America were too eager and too anxious to reap the advantages of war. It was not likely that the Colonial English would allow a rich prize to pass them, only to be seized a hundred leagues farther east by the home authorities. The Colonial French were not to be expected in time of war to suffer tamely from competition in the fur-trade, when the very principles of their allegiance urged them to forcible retaliation.

Negotiations for Colonial neutrality.

Even without the episode of the *Merchant of Perpetuana* the rivalry between the two nations for the fur-trade was so bitter as to be a perpetual danger to peace. For this reason, and in order to mark some delimitation to the trade of the two countries, the

joint commission had sat and examined into the matter.

On the sixth of November, 1686, a treaty of neutrality had been concluded between the two kings. It stipulated for a "firm peace, union, and concord, and good understanding between the subjects" of James and Lewis. No vessels of either sovereign were thereafter to be employed in attacking the subjects of the other in any of the colonies. No soldiers of either king stationed in any of the colonies were to engage in any act of hostility such as giving aid or succour to men, or provisions to savages, at war with one another. But the fourth article of this treaty was productive of much confusion and misunderstanding.

"It has been agreed," it ran, "that each of the said kings shall hold the domains, rights, pre-eminences in the seas, straits, and other waters of America which, and in the same extent, of right belongs to them; and in the same manner which they enjoy at present."

Now, at the very moment this treaty was signed, the French, by the victory of Troyes, were in possession of Fort Albany and the English still held Port Nelson. As the liberty of navigation was not disturbed by the Treaty, it would appear that the French retained the right to sail in the Bay.

Commissioners were appointed to consider the carrying out of the treaty, the Sieurs Barillon and Bonrepas acting on behalf of France, and Lords

Sutherland, Middleton, and Godolphin for James. To these commissioners the Company presented a further memorial, which dwelt upon their grievances "for five years past, in a time of peace and good correspondence between the two crowns."

These commissioners appear to have done their best to arrange matters satisfactorily; but such a result was impossible under the conditions. They were privately instructed by their respective masters to agree to hold the trade of Port Nelson in common.

Impracticability of the Treaty.

Such a proposal was extremely impracticable, as that well-informed subject, Denonville, made haste to inform his royal master. The proximity of the English, he declared, in such a remote part would be a certain source of hostility on both sides, and a dangerous temptation for numbers of "libertines," whom the least dissatisfaction would induce to take refuge at Port Nelson.

The "libertines" he thus alluded to were the bushrangers, who were already giving the French great trouble and uneasiness through their wild, undisciplined habits and their freedom from restraint. Denonville added that the Hudson's Bay Company, paying higher prices for beaver than the French could do, would always have a preference, and consequently would almost monopolise the trade. It was therefore better, in his opinion, to effect a compromise in the Bay, restoring the three forts which Troyes had taken in exchange for Port Nelson, which, so he

stated, was worth more than the other three together for trading purposes. Besides, on the first rupture, it would be very easy to retake them by an overland march, as Troyes had done.

But such proposals on the part of the French were indignantly rejected by the English Company. There was, therefore, nothing available but a *modus vivendi*, under which no further encroachments in the Bay were to be made by either party.

There was no force to compel the parties directly interested to subscribe to this arrangement. The elated French Company was too much inclined to retain what Troyes had wrested from the English to listen to sophistries and amiable generalities. It engaged Iberville to return to Fort Albany, upon which establishment it had bestowed the name of St. Anne, and repulse the English should their crews arrive and endeavour to land. Captain Moon, returning from Port Nelson, made an attempt with twenty-four men to surprise the French. He built a station some eight miles from Albany; Iberville heard of it, marched with great despatch, and chased the English for twenty miles. He then made preparations for seizing Captain Moon's ship, embarking for this purpose upwards of forty men in canoes and small boats. But those aboard defeated his intention in the night, by setting fire to the Company's ship and making their escape to the shore, where they rejoined their companions and made the best of their way overland to

New Severn, a fort which had been erected in the previous year as a means of drawing trade away from the French conquerors in the eastern parts of the Bay.

Iberville was not long ignorant of the retreat of those who had escaped him; nor of the prosperity which attended the new factory. Arriving before New Severn in October 1689, he obtained its surrender and took the Company's Governor prisoner.

Amongst the papers belonging to this official which he seized was a letter from the secretary of the Company, ordering him, on behalf of the partners, to proclaim the Prince and Princess of Orange King and Queen of England, of itself testimony that the chief spirits of the Company were not unfriendly to those who precipitated the Revolution.

Glorying in his new exploit, Iberville now returned to Fort St. Anne, there to behold the spectacle of two strange ships standing motionless in the Bay.

The presence of these vessels is explained by the Company's having sent out an expedition, comprising eighty-three men of both crews, with instructions to land on an island close to the Chechouan River and establish a fort, from whence they could sally forth to the re-conquest of Fort Albany. But already the winter had overtaken them, and the two vessels were locked in the ice. Happily, the new fort was pretty well advanced, and the party had landed a number of pieces of cannon. Iberville lay in ambush watching his opportunity, and when twenty-one of the English

were proceeding for a supply of stores to the ship, intercepted them. The whole party fell into the hands of the French; and Marincourt, with fourteen men, instituted an attack upon the forces on the island. A brisk cannonading ensued between French and English. After this had lasted some days Iberville peremptorily summoned the Company's commander to surrender, threatening him with no quarter if he deferred compliance.

To this the Governor responded that he had been given to understand on his departure from London that a treaty was in force between the two Crowns, and that it occasioned him much astonishment that the French paid so little heed to it. Iberville's response was not exactly truthful, for he declared that whether a treaty existed or not he had not been the first to invade it; and that in any case he could waste no time in parley. The Governor replied that his force was still a strong one; but that he would not be averse to surrender if Iberville would agree to reimburse the Company's officers out of the proceeds of their store of furs; and also accord them a vessel wherewith to sail away. This stipulation was granted; Iberville grimly remarking that it was extraordinary what a large number of officers there were for so small a company of men. He had already captured the captain of one of the vessels and the surgeon; and there now remained thirteen others who by reason of Iberville's promise

Surrender of the Company's ships to the French.

escaped scot-free from the clutches of the French. The amount of wages demanded was close upon two thousand pounds. All the others were made prisoners, including the pilots, of whom it is said there were twelve who had been despatched by the Admiralty to acquire a knowledge of the Bay and Straits. All were carried off by Iberville to Quebec, and Marincourt left behind with thirty-six men to guard the two posts. The young commander did not this time proceed overland, but having got possession of the Company's ship, the *Hampshire*, he sailed northward for the Straits. He had scarcely reached the latitude of Southampton Island when an English ship hove in sight, proceeding in his direction. They came so close together as to exchange speech. Iberville had taken the precaution to hoist the English flag, and the presence of the prisoners caused implicit belief in his friendly pretensions. He learned that young Chouart, Radisson's nephew, was on board, and himself declares that he longed to attack openly the Company's ship, but the insufficiency of his force to guard the prisoners prevented his following that plan. He had, however, recourse to a stratagem which almost obtained success. The captain of the English ship agreed to sail in his company through the Straits, and on the first clear weather to pay a visit to Iberville. Whereupon it was, it is almost needless to observe, the Frenchman's intention to seize the guileless Englishman and his companions the moment they set foot on his

Iberville's treacherous plan.

deck. But storms intervening, this project fell through. The ships separated and they did not meet again.

The Hudson's Bay Company was not a little puzzled at the non-arrival of the *Hampshire*, which had been spoken thus happily in Hudson's Straits. For a long time the vessel was believed to be lost; as, indeed, she was, but not quite in the manner apprehended by her owners. Possession was not regained for some years; and when again the *Hampshire* sailed for the Bay it was there to suffer complete destruction in battle.

As has been foreshadowed, in 1689 an event which had been brewing ever since James had relinquished the governorship of the Company for the governorship of his subjects at large occurred. William of Orange landed at Plymouth, and the Revolution in England put a new king on the English throne.

NOTE.—The career of the Chevalier de Troyes ended abruptly and tragically in 1687, when he and all his men, to the number of ninety, were massacred at Niagara.

CHAPTER XIII

1689–1696

COMPANY'S CLAIMS MENTIONED IN DECLARATION OF WAR—PARLIAMENT GRANTS COMPANY'S APPLICATION FOR CONFIRMATION OF ITS CHARTER—IMPLACABILITY OF THE FELT-MAKERS—FORT ALBANY NOT A SUCCESS IN THE HANDS OF THE FRENCH—DENONVILLE URGES AN ATTACK UPON PORT NELSON—LEWIS DESPATCHES TAST WITH A FLEET TO CANADA—IBERVILLE'S JEALOUSY PREVENTS ITS SAILING TO THE BAY—GOVERNOR PHIPPS BURNS FORT NELSON—FURTHER AGITATION ON THE PART OF THE FRENCH TO POSSESS THE WEST MAIN—COMPANY MAKES ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO REGAIN FORT ALBANY—FORT NELSON SURRENDERED TO IBERVILLE—ITS RE-CONQUEST BY THE COMPANY.

STRAIGHTWAY upon William the Third's accession the Company renewed its claims to the property of which it had been deprived, and also for reparation for the damages it had suffered at the hands of the French in time of peace.

"As to the article of the Company's losses, it will appear," it said, "by a true and exact estimate, that the French took from the Company, in full peace between 1682 and 1688, seven ships with their cargoes, and six forts and factories, from which they carried away great stores of goods laid up for

trading with the Indians. The whole amounts to £38,332, 15s."

To such effect was this memorial presented to the King that William caused the hostile proceedings of Lewis in the Company's territory to be inserted in one of the articles of his Declaration of War, in these words: "But that the French King should invade our Caribbee Islands and possess himself of our territories of the Province of New York and Hudson's Bay, in hostile manner, seizing our forts, burning our subjects' houses and enriching his people with the spoil of our goods and merchandises, detaining some of our subjects under the hardships of imprisonment, causing others to be inhumanly killed, and driving the rest to sea in a small vessel without food or necessaries to support them, are actions not even becoming an enemy; and yet he was so far from declaring himself so, that at that very time he was negotiating here in England, by his Ministers, a treaty of neutrality and good correspondence in America."

Much has been made by later writers, hostile to the Company, of a circumstance which soon afterwards took place.

Owing to the state of public feeling in England towards the Stewarts at the time of the Revolution, the Company, keenly alive to the fact of the exiled king's having been so recently its Governor, sought at the beginning of William's reign to strengthen its position by an Act of Parliament confirming the charter

granted by Charles II. Why, have asked its enemies, if the Company had the utmost confidence in this instrument, did it thus resort to Lords and Commons? And why was this confirmation limited to but seven years? I have already answered the first question; as to the second, the Company itself asked for no longer period. The proceeding was no secret; it was done openly. Parliament made but one stipulation, and that at the instance of the Felt-makers' Company; that the Adventurers "should be obliged to make at least two sales of 'coat beaver' annually, and not exceeding four. These should be proportioned in lotts of about £100 sterling each, and not exceeding £200. In the intervals of public sales the Company should be debarred from selling beaver by private Contract, or at any price than was sett up at the last Publick sale."

The Company's charter confirmed.

The Company asked for a confirmation of its charter by Parliament as a prudent course in uncertain times; and also in order to more firmly establish its claim to reparation for damages. The nation's representatives saw no reason why they should not issue a confirmation; there being none, save the Felt-makers, to oppose it.

The charter being confirmed, it was decided that the nominal capital of the Company should be increased to £31,500, several good reasons being put foward in committee for thus trebling the stock. These reasons were quaintly enumerated as follows:—

"I. That the Company have actually in Warehouse above the value of their first original stock.

"II. That they have set out an Expedition this Yeare in their Shipps and Cargoe to more than the Value of their First Stock again; the trading of which Goods may well be estimated, in expectation as much more.

"III. That our Factories at Port Nelson River and New Severne are under an increasing Trade; and that our Returns in Beavers this yeare (by God's Blessing) are modestly expected to be worth £20,000.

The Company increases its capital.

"IV. Our Forts, Factories, Guns and other Materials, the prospect of new Settlements and further Trade, are also reasonably to be estimated at a considerable intrinsic Value.

"V. And lastly, our just Expectancy of a very considerable reparation and satisfaction from the French and the close of this War and the restoring our places and Trade at the Bottom of the Bay; which upon proof, hath been made out above £100,000."

Some years later the Treaty of Ryswick, in securing to the French the fruits of Iberville's victory, powerfully affected for ill the fortunes of the Company. Nevertheless, the whole nation was then in sympathy with its cause, knowing that but for the continued existence of the Honourable Adventurers as a body corporate the chances of the western portion of the Bay reverting to the English Crown were remote indeed.

But the Felt-makers, who would like to have seen the beaver trade in their own hands, proved implacable. At the expiration of the seven years for which the confirmation was allowed, they again, as will be shown, evinced, yet vainly, their enmity.

Because this parliamentary confirmation was limited to so short a period, some writers have conjectured that at the expiration of that period the charter ceased to be valid. So absurd a conclusion would scarcely appear to stand in need of refutation. Could those who pretend to have reached it have been ignorant that if some of the rights conferred by the charter required the sanction of Parliament, other rights were conferred thereby which required no such sanction, because they were within the prerogative of the Crown? Even assuming that at the end of the term for which the act of William and Mary was passed, such of the provisions of the charter (if there could be found any such) as derived their efficacy only from parliamentary support should be considered inefficient, still all the rights similar to those of the charters for former governments and plantations in America would continue to exist. That they were regarded as existing is made evident by the repeated references to them in various subsequent international treaties and acts of Parliament. King George and his advisers completely recognised the Company as proprietors of a certain domain. In establishing the limits of the newly-acquired Province of Canada, it

was enacted that it should be bounded on the north by "the territory granted to the Merchants-Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay," a boundary which by statute was long to subsist.

Fort Albany did not prove a success in the hands of the French. The Quebec Company were losing money, and they had no ships. They were, besides, severely handicapped by physical conditions, owing to the inaccessibility of the Bay by land and the impracticability of carrying merchandise by the overland route. It seemed clear that, after all, the trade of the Bay could only be made profitable by sea.[1] The French were consequently most anxious to exchange the forts on James' Bay for Fort Nelson, because they were aware that better furs were to be had in the north; and because it would enable them to intercept the tribes who hunted about Lake Nepigon.

Denonville is now found writing long despatches to Seignely, assuring him that French affairs in Hudson's Bay would prosper if the Northern Company continued to co-operate with and second the designs of Iberville, whose fixed resolve was to go and seize Fort Nelson. For that purpose Denonville regarded it as necessary

[1] It has been well observed that the protracted and bloody contest between the French and English for the possession of the Bay was the result of a desire of the Governor to have access to those waters, and the resolve of the latter to defeat this purpose. "The truth is," says Mr. Lindsay, "the fur-trade was only profitable when carried on by water." At Quebec or Three Rivers forty beaver skins made a canoe load. A single canoe load of northern furs was worth six of the southern.

that the Minister should inform M. de Lagny that the King desired the capture of that fort, and to "furnish Iberville with everything he requires to render his designs successful." The Governor himself thought one ship added to those they had captured in 1689 from the English would suffice. He sought to obtain for Iberville some honourable rank in the navy, as this would, he urged, excite honourable emulation amongst the Canadians who were ready to follow the sea. Denonville suggested a lieutenancy, adding his opinion that his young friend was "a very fine fellow, capable of rendering himself expert and doing good service." His plea was most successful at court; for Lewis was pleased to confer upon Iberville the rank of lieutenant in the French Royal Navy, the first distinction of the kind then granted. It fired the blood and pride of not a few of the Canadian youth, one Peter Gaulthier de Varennes amongst the rest. Many years later he, under the name of Verandrye, was the first of the great pioneers through the territories of the Great Company.

Denonville plans the capture of Fort Nelson.

All negotiations for an exchange of forts having been fruitless, the *Compagnie du Nord* determined to make a valiant attempt to obtain their desires by force. For this purpose they made powerful application to the Court; and in the autumn of 1691 their petition resulted in the arrival at Quebec of Admiral Tast with no fewer than fourteen ships.

It was said in Quebec that while Lewis XIV. surprised his enemies by his celerity in taking the field in Europe, the vessels sent out to America by his order always started two or three months too late for Canada and the Bay. This tardiness, it was declared, was the sole cause of all the losses and want of success attending French enterprises in that part of the New World.[1]

However this may be, there was beyond question another and not less potent reason for the failure which overtook the proposed expedition of Tast on behalf of the Northern Company. Iberville's successes had up to this moment tended to bolster up the waning popularity of the Company in Canada. This popular hero had just returned from the Bay with 80,000 francs value in beaver skins, and 6000 livres in small furs. He now refused point blank to have anything to do with the new expedition, as he did not care to share such glory and profit as he might obtain aided by his own followers, with the Company and Admiral Tast.

Without this powerful auxiliary and the support of the populace, Tast's fleet abandoned its expedition to the Bay, and sailed away to Acadia and Newfoundland.

Nevertheless, while Governor Phipps was in charge of Fort Nelson this year, a French frigate belonging to the enemy appeared at the entrance of Bourbon River. As it chanced that nearly the whole of his

[1] Charlevoix.

garrison were absent from the fort on a hunting expedition, it seemed to the Governor that armed resistance would be folly. Rather, therefore, than allow the fort to pass again into the hands of the French under circumstances so humiliating, he resolved to burn it, together with a large part of its merchandise, valued at about £8000, well knowing that without the merchandise the French could not procure furs from the Indians.

Burning of Port Nelson.

Whilst the flames of the fort were ascending, Phipps and three men he had with him retreated into ambush, afterwards establishing themselves with some Indians in the interior.

The Frenchman landed, saw the perdition of his hopes in the ruin of the fort and its contents, and returned to the ship with a few hatchets and knives as the sole trophy of his enterprise. On the arrival of the Company's ship in the spring, however, York Factory was rebuilt stronger and on a larger scale than before.

Iberville at this time finds great cause of complaint in the French Company's poverty, and its inability to occupy the region after it had been won for them. More than a single trading ship was required; and a larger number of men in the vicinity of Fort Nelson would have served to keep the English off perpetually.

In 1693 the Northern Company petitioned Pontchartrain, who had succeeded Seignely at Court, with respect to operations in the Bay. The Company

declared that it could hold everything were it but enabled to seize Fort Nelson; but that continued hostilities and losses had so weakened it as to oblige it to have recourse to his Excellency to obtain sufficient force at a suitable time to drive out the English.

In another petition it is alleged that this "single fort which remains in the possession of the English is of so much importance that the gain or loss of everything in Hudson's Bay depends upon it. The Company's establishment in Quebec, to carry on this commerce, claims anew the protection of your Excellency, that you may give it a sufficient force to enable it to become master of Fort Nelson, which the English took by an act of treason against this Company in time of peace. This they hope from the strong desire which you have for the aggrandisement of the kingdom, and from your affection for this colony."

Iberville crossed over to France, meeting with a warm reception from the Court at Versailles. He unfolded his plans for the capture of Fort Nelson, stated what force he would require for this desirable purpose, and was promised two ships in the following spring.[1] Highly elated with his success, he departed for home in the *Envieux*.

[1] Although by this action the French Court directly participated in and lent its support to the hostilities against the English, yet to all intents and purposes the war was between two commercial corporations. The ruling spirits of the Northern Company were not unaware of the importance and power of the enemy they had to deal with. In a pamphlet published in France in 1692 there is amusing testimony to

Meanwhile the Hudson's Bay Company made another effort to regain Fort Albany. A fleet of three powerfully armed ships under Captain Grimington wintered at Port Nelson and sailed southward in the spring of 1693.[1] From all accounts that had been received, it was not believed that the rival French Company was in a position to maintain a very strong force for an all-winter defence, especially since the alienation of Iberville. Forty men were landed, and approaching the post were met by a fire which though brisk failed to check the English advance. Much to their own astonishment, they were permitted to close

the consideration in which the Hudson's Bay Company was held by the French.

"It is composed," says this authority, "of opulent merchants and noblemen of the first quality; and it is known that the King himself is part proprietor, having succeeded to that emolument with the other belongings to King James II. So great are its profits that each member is worth at least £50,000 English sterling above what he was before he embarked in the fur traffic. There can be no secrecy about its intention, which is to subvert and subjugate the whole northern country to its sway."

[1] Captain Grimington was an experienced naval officer, who had seen service in the late wars. I have not been able to ascertain Grimington's fate, but in the Company's minute-book, under date of 19th of May 1714, I find the following entry:—

"Mrs. Ann Grimington, widow of Captain Michael Grimington, deceased, having delivered in her petition to the Company, the same was read, and considering her poverty and the faithful services her husband performed for the Company, the Committee agreed to allow the said Mrs. Grimington twelve shillings per month for her subsistence, which the secretary is ordered to pay her every first Monday in the month, to commence the first Monday in June next. Interim, the secretary is ordered to pay her twenty shillings as charity, which is afterwards to be taken out of the poor-box." This is sufficiently strong evidence of the state into which the Company had fallen.

upon the fort without check, and consequently a ruse was suspected. Entrance was effected with great caution; and the premises seemed, at first, deserted. But at length, in a corner of the cellar, shrivelled, covered with rags, and a victim to scurvy, a human being was discovered. His arms and legs were fastened together, and a heavy chain kept him close to the wall. While all were marvelling at this discovery, some of the sailors came to inform the captain that three Frenchmen had been seen at a distance flying as fast as their legs would carry them. Captain Grimington was not long left in doubt as to the facts: these three Frenchmen were the garrison of the fort St. Anne. The unlucky wretch they had found proved to be a bushranger who, in a paroxysm of rage, had murdered the surgeon at the fort. Horrified, on recovering his reason, at what he had done, and fearing that the only witness of the deed, Father Dalmas, would betray him to the rest, he slew him also. The priest lived long enough to disclose his murderer, whose ten companions had chained the criminal in the cellar, not themselves relishing the task of his summary execution.

The English regain Fort Albany.

Iberville did not leave Quebec until the 10th[1] of

[1] To illustrate the divergence of authorities in such matters, I may mention that while Jérémie, who took part in this expedition, calls the two ships the *Poli* and *Charente* (in which he is followed by Abbé Ferland), Father Marest, the aumonier of the crew, refers to the second ship as the *Salamandre*. His relation is entitled "Le Voyage du *Poli* et *Salamandre*." In the letter of Frontenac to the French

August, and arrived at Fort Nelson, September 24th. Almost immediately he disembarked with all his people, also with cannons, mortars, and a large quantity of ammunition. Batteries were thrown up about five hundred yards from the palisades, and upon these guns were mounted.[1] A bombardment now took place, lasting from the 25th of September to the 14th of October, when the Governor was forced to surrender, owing to his dread of a conflagration as well as to the loss of several of his best men. On this occasion young Henry Kelsey[2] showed great bravery, and a

minister (November 5, 1694) it is stated that Sérigny commanded the *Salamandre*. La Potherie observes that the ships sent out in 1694 were the *Poli* and *Salamandre*. Furthermore, he declares, they sailed the 8th of August; Frontenac states the 9th, and Jérémie the 10th (*Jour de St. Laurent*). La Potherie and Jérémie agree on the date of their arrival, September 24th, although Ferland says it was the 20th.

[1] Jérémie gives us a detailed description of the fort in his "Relation." He says it was composed of four bastions, which formed a square of thirty feet, with a large stone house above and below. In one of these bastions was the store-room for furs and merchandise, another served for provisions; a third was used by the garrison. All were built of wood. In a line with the first palisade there were two other bastions, in one of which lodged the officers, the other serving as a kitchen and forge. Between these two bastions was a crescent-shaped earthworks sheltering eight cannon, firing eight-pound balls, and defending the side of the fort towards the river. At the foot of this earthworks was a platform, fortified by six pieces of large cannon. There was no butt-range looking out upon the wood, which was a weak point; all the cannon and swivel-guns were on the bastions. In all, the armament consisted of thirty-two cannon and fourteen swivel-guns outside the fort and fifty-three inside; on the whole, calculated to make a stalwart defence.

[2] Kelsey was the earliest English explorer in the North-West. Mention of his achievements will be found in the course of Chapter XV.

report of his gallantry being forwarded to the Company, he was presented with a sum of forty pounds as a token of their appreciation. This youth was destined to be long in the service of the Company, as first in command at Fort Nelson.

Iberville takes Fort Nelson.

Iberville accomplished his entry on the 15th of October. The French standard was hoisted and the fort christened Bourbon; it being St. Theresa's Day, the river was given the name of that saint. The enemy did not come out of this business unscathed; for they lost several of their men, including a brother of Iberville.

Some of the English were kept prisoners, while others made their way as best they could to New Severn and Albany. At the time of the surrender, the fort was well furnished with merchandise and provisions, and this circumstance induced the French to remain for the winter, before returning to France.

On the 20th of the following July, Iberville departed for the straits in his two vessels, the *Poli* and *Salamandre*. He left 67 men under the command of La Forest. Martigny became lieutenant, and Jérémie was appointed ensign, with the additional functions of interpreter and "director of commerce."

But the French conquerors were not likely to enjoy security of trade and occupation for long. A meeting of the Company was convened in London the moment these outrages were reported. The King was besought to send a fleet of four ships to the

rescue and recapture of Fort Nelson. But it was too late to sail that year. When the news of this English expedition at length reached Lewis, Sérigny was sent in June 1696, with two of the best craft procurable at Rochelle. Although they sailed three days before the English, the French ships arrived two hours too late to succour the garrison. They were no match for the English, and as the Company's vessels occupied the mouth of the river, there was no safe landing-place at hand. Accordingly they discreetly withdrew, and both ships set sail again for France; but one, the *Hardi*, was never to reach her destination. She ran against ice at the mouth of the straits and went to the bottom with all on board.

Fort Nelson surrenders to the English fleet.

The English commenced the attack on the fort August 29th. On the following day it was decided to land, and the French, seeing the strength of their force, had no alternative but surrender. Perchance by way of retaliation for the affairs of Albany and New Severn, the provisions of capitulation[1] were disregarded; all the French were

[1] Allen sent home to his superiors a copy of the capitulation proposals of the French Commandant. This document is not without interest. It is headed:—

CAPITULATION OF FORT YORK, 1696.

Articles of capitulation between William Allen, Commandant-in-Chief at Hays, or St. Therese River, and Sieur G. de la Forest, Commandant at Fort York, or Bourbon, August 31, 1696.

I consent to give up to you my fort on the following conditions:—

1. That I and all my men, French as well as Indians, and my English

made prisoners and carried to England. Possession was taken of a vast quantity of furs, and the English returned, well satisfied with their exploit; but not ignorant of the difficulties which surrounded the maintenance of such ascendency as their conquest had procured.

servant, shall have our lives and liberty granted to us, and that no wrong or violence shall be exercised upon us or whatever belongs to us.

2. We shall march out of the fort without arms, to the beat of the drum, match lighted, ball in mouth, flags unfurled, and carry with us the two cannon which we brought from France.

3. We shall be transported altogether, in our own vessel, to Plaisance, a French Port in New Newfoundland. We do not wish to give up the fort till we have embarked, and we shall keep the French flag over the fort till we march out.

4. If we meet with our vessels there shall be a truce between us, and it shall be permitted to transport us with whatever belongs to us.

5. We shall take with us all the beaver skins and other merchandise obtained in trade this year, which shall be embarked with us upon our vessels.

6. All my men shall embark their clothes and whatever belongs to them without being subject to visitation, or robbed of anything.

7. In case of sickness during the voyage, you shall furnish us with all the remedies and medicines which we may require.

8. The two Frenchmen, who ought to return with the Indians, shall be received in the fort on their return, where they shall be treated the same as the English, and sent to Europe during the same year, or they shall be furnished with everything necessary to take them to Rochelle.

We shall have the full exercise of our religion, and the Jesuit priest, our missionary, shall publicly perform the functions of his ministry.

CHAPTER XIV

1696–1697

Imprisoned French Fur-Traders reach Paris—A Fleet under Iberville despatched by Lewis to the Bay—Company's four Ships precede them through the Straits—Beginning of a fierce Battle—The "Hampshire" Sinks—Escape of the "Dering" and capture of the "Hudson's Bay"—Dreadful Storm in the Bay—Losses of the Victors—Landing of Iberville—Operations against Fort Nelson—Bailey Yields—Evacuation by the English.

The French prisoners captured in the Company's expedition of 1696 suffered an incarceration of nearly four months at Portsmouth. No sooner had their liberty been regained than they boarded a French brig bound for Havre, and on arrival in Paris lost little time in making known the condition of affairs at Hudson's Bay. Lewis and his Ministers, gazing upon this emaciated band of traders and bushrangers, could hardly refrain from taking immediate action to retrieve the situation. Precisely following the tactics of their enemy in the previous year, they engaged four men-of-war; which fleet was despatched to join Iberville, then at the port of Placentia in Newfoundland. The Court was well aware that there was no one man so

thoroughly equipped at all points in knowledge of the Bay, and the conditions there of life and warfare, as this hero. Consequently it is not surprising, although numerous enough, all other offers to lead the expedition were rejected.

On the arrival of the French ships at Placentia, Iberville took command, embarking in the *Pelican*, of fifty guns. The others were the *Palmier*, the *Weesph*, the *Pelican*, and the *Violent*.[1]

But Fort Nelson was not to be captured without a grim struggle.

At the very moment almost that the French fleet sailed, there departed from Plymouth four of the Company's ships, the *Hampshire*, the *Hudson's Bay*, the *Dering*, and *Owner's Love*, a fire-ship, the two former having participated in the re-conquest of the previous year. The Company's fleet entered the straits forty hours only before the ships of the French; and like them was much impeded by the ice, which was, that season, unusually troublesome. Passage was made by Iberville in the English wake. The *Profond*, commanded by Duqué, pushed past the currents, taking a northerly course, which brought her commander into full view of two of the Company's ships. Shots were

Meeting of the French and English ships.

[1] A young Irishman, Edmund Fitz-Maurice, of Kerry, who had embraced the Church, and had served with James's army at the Battle of the Boyne, accompanied the expedition in the character of chaplain. He is alluded to by the French chronicler of the affair as "Fiche-Maurice de Kieri de la Maison du Milord Kieri en Irlande."

exchanged; but owing to the difficulties engendered by the ice, it was impossible to manœuvre with such certainty as to cut off the Frenchman's escape. While this skirmish was in progress, Iberville in the *Pelican* succeeded in getting past the English without their knowledge, and reached the mouth of the Nelson River in sight of the fort. His presence, as may be conceived, greatly surprised and disturbed the Governor and the Company's servants; for they had believed their own ships would arrive in ample season to prevent the enemy from entering the straits. Several rounds of shot were fired as a signal, in the forlorn hope of a response by the ships of the Company expected hourly in that quarter. But eyes and ears were strained to no purpose.

On his part the French commander was equally disturbed by the non-arrival of his three consorts, which the exigencies of the voyage had obliged him to forsake. Two days were passed in a state of suspense. At daybreak on the 5th of September three ships[1] were distinctly visible; each party joyfully believed they were its own. So certain was Iberville, that he immediately raised anchor and started to join the newcomers. He was soon undeceived, but the perception of his mistake in no way daunted him.

[1] Of the fourth, the fire-ship *Owner's Love*, nothing more was ever heard. It is supposed that, separated from the others, she ran into the ice and was sunk, with all on board.

The Company's commanders were not prepared either for the daring or the fury of the Frenchman's onslaught. It is true the *Pelican* was much superior to any of their own craft singly, being manned by nearly two hundred and fifty men, and boasting forty-four pieces of cannon. The Company's ships lined up, the *Hampshire* in front, the *Dering* next, with the *Hudson's Bay* bringing up the rear.

The combatants being in close proximity the battle began at half-past nine in the morning. The French commander came straight for the *Hampshire*, whose captain, believing it was his enemy's design to board, instantly lowered his mainsheet and put up his fore-topsail. Contact having been by these means narrowly avoided, the scene of battle suddenly shifted to the *Pelican* and the *Dering*, whose mainsail was smitten by a terrific volley. At the same time the *Hudson's Bay*, veering, received a damaging broadside. The Company's men could distinctly hear the orders shouted by Iberville to both ships to discharge a musket fire into the *Dering's* fore-castle, but in this move he was anticipated by the English sailors, who poured a storm of bullets in upon the Frenchman, accompanied by a broadside of grape, which wrought havoc with his sails. While the cries of the wounded on the *Pelican* could be distinctly heard, all three of the Company's ships opened fire, with the design of disabling her rigging. But the captain of the *Hudson's Bay*, seeing that he could not

A fierce battle in the Bay.

engage the *Pelican*, owing to Iberville's tactics, determined to run in front of her and give her the benefit of a constant hull fire, besides taking the wind from her sails. Iberville observed the movement; the two English vessels were near; he veered around, and by a superb piece of seamanship came so near to the *Hampshire* that the crew of the latter perceived that boarding was intended. Every man flew out on the main deck, with his pistol and cutlass, and a terrific broadside of grape on the part of the Englishman alone saved him.

The battle raged hotter and fiercer. The *Hampshire's* salvation had been only temporary; at the end of three hours and a half she began to sink, with all sails set. When this occurred, Iberville had ninety men wounded, forty being struck by a single broadside. Notwithstanding this, he decided at once to push matters with the *Hampshire's* companions, although the *Pelican* was in a badly damaged state, especially the forecastle, which was a mass of splinters.

The enemy made at once for the *Dering*, which, besides being the smallest ship, had suffered severely. She crowded on all sail and so managed to avoid an encounter, and Iberville being in no condition to prosecute the chase, returned to the *Hudson's Bay*, which soon surrendered. Iberville was not destined, however, to reap much advantage from his prize, the *Hampshire*. The English flag-ship was unable to

render any assistance to her, and she soon went down with nearly all on board.[1]

To render the situation more distressing, no sooner had some ninety prisoners been transferred to the French vessel, than a storm arose; so that it became out of the question to approach the shore with design of landing. They were without a long-boat, and each attempt to launch canoes in the boiling surf was attended with failure.

Night fell; the wind instead of calming, grew fiercer. The sea became truly terrible, seeking, seemingly, with all its power to drive the *Pelican* and the *Hudson's Bay* upon the coast. The rudders of each ship broke; the tide rose, and there seemed no hope for the crews whose destiny was so cruel. Their only hope in the midst of the bitter blast and clouds of snow which environed them, lay in the strength of their cables. Soon after nine o'clock the *Hudson's Bay* and its anchor parted with a shock.

A great storm.

"Instantly," says one of the survivors, "a piercing cry went up from our forecastle. The wounded and dead lay heaped up, with so little separation one from the other that silence and moans alone distinguished them. All were icy cold, and covered with blood. They had told us the anchor would hold; and

[1] Thus was concluded what was, in the opinion of the best authorities, French and English, one of the fiercest and bloodiest battles of the war. "Toute la Marine de Rochefort croient que ce combat a été un des plus rudes de cette Guerre," says La Potherie.

we dreaded being washed up on the shore stiff the next morning."

A huge wave broke over the main deck and the ship rocked desperately. Two hours later the keel was heard to split, and the ship was hurled rudderless to and fro in the trough of the sea.

By the French account, matters were in no more enviable state aboard the *Pelican;* Iberville, however, amidst scenes rivalling those just described, did his best to animate his officers and men with a spirit equalling his own.

"It is better," he cried, "to die, if we must, outside the bastions of Fort Bourbon than to perish like pent sheep here on board."

When morning broke, it was seen by the French that their ship was not yet submerged, and it was resolved to disembark by such means as lay in their power. The Company's servants were more fortunate. The *Hudson's Bay* had drifted eight miles to the south of the fort, and was wrecked on a bank of icy marshland, which at least constrained them to wade no deeper than their knees. The French, on the other hand, were forced to make their way through the icy water submerged to their necks, from the results of which terrible exposure no fewer than eighteen marines and seamen lost their lives. Once on shore they could not, like the English, look forward to a place of refuge, and appease their hunger with provisions and their thirst with stimulat-

Terrible plight of the shipwrecked French.

ing drink. They were obliged, in their shivering, half-frozen state, to subsist upon moss and seaweed, but for which indifferent nourishment they must inevitably have perished.

The Company's garrison witnessed the calamities which were overtaking the French, but not knowing how great their numbers, and assured of their hostility, did not attempt any acts of mercy. They perceived the enemy camped in a wood, less than two leagues distant, where, building several large fires, they sought to restore their spirits by means of warmth and hot draughts of boiled herbs.

While the fort was being continually recruited by survivors of the two wrecked ships, the other three French vessels had arrived on the scene. The fourth, the *Violent*, lay at the bottom of the Bay, having been sunk by the ice. The *Palmier* had suffered the loss of her helm, but was fortunate in not being also a victim of the storm. The French forces being now united, little time was lost by Iberville in making active preparations for the attack upon the fort.

On the 11th, the enemy attained a small wood, almost under the guns of the fort, and having entrenched themselves, lit numerous fires and made considerable noise in order to lend the impression to the English that an entrenchment was being thrown up. This ruse was successful, for the Governor gave orders to fire in that direction. Iberville, seizing the

opportunity thus afforded, effected a landing of all his men and armaments from the ships.

The fort would now soon be hemmed in on all sides, and it were indeed strange if a chance shot or firebrand did not ignite the timbers, or the powder magazine were not exploded. Governor Bailey was holding a council of his advisers when one of the French prisoners in the fort gave notice of the approach of a messenger bearing a flag of truce. He was recognised as Martigny. The Governor permitted his advance, but sent a factor to meet him and insist upon his eyes being bandaged before he would have leave to enter. Martigny was conducted to where the council was sitting and there delivered Iberville's message, demanding surrender. He was instantly interrupted by Captain Smithsend, who, with a great show of passion, asked the emissary if it were not true that Iberville had been killed in the action. In spite of Martigny's denials, Smithsend loudly persisted in believing in Iberville's death; and held that the French were in sore straits and only made the present attack because no other alternative was offered to desperate men to obtain food and shelter. Bailey allowed himself to be influenced by Smithsend, and declined to yield to any of Martigny's demands. The latter in consequence retired, and the French instantly set up a battery near the fort and continued, amidst a hail of bullets, the work of landing their damaged

Iberville demands surrender of the fort.

stores and armaments. Stragglers from the wreck of the *Hudson's Bay* continued all day to find their way to the fort, but several reached it only to be shot down in mistake by the cannon and muskets of their own men. On the 12th, after a hot skirmish, fatal to both sides, the Governor was again requested, this time by Sérigny, to yield up the fort to superior numbers.

"If you refuse we will set fire to the place, and accord you no quarter," was the French ultimatum.

"Set fire and be d——d to you!" responded Governor Bailey.

He then set to work, with Smithsend, whose treatment at the hands of the French in the affair of the *Merchant of Perpetuana* was still vividly before him, to animate the garrison.

"Go for them, you dogs!" cried Bailey. "Give it to them hot and heavy; I promise you forty pounds apiece for your widows!"

Fighting in those days was attended by fearful mortality, and the rarity of pensions to the family of the slain, perhaps, made the offer seem handsome. At any rate it seemed a sufficient incentive to the Company's men, who fought like demons.[1]

A continual fire of guns and mortars, as well as of muskets, was maintained. The Canadians sallied out, filling the air with a frightful din, as they borrowed

[1] "Ils avoient de très habile cannoniers," Jérémie, an eye-witness, was forced to confess.

from the Iroquois their piercing war-cries. In one of these skirmishes St. Martin, one of their bravest men, perished.

Under protection of a flag of truce, Sérigny came again to demand a surrender. It was the last time, he said, that the request would be preferred. A general assault had been resolved upon by the enemy, who were at their last resort, living like beasts in the wood, feeding on moss, and to whom no extremity could be odious were it but an exchange for their present condition. They were resolved upon carrying the fort, even at the point of the bayonet and over heaps of their slain.

Bailey prudently decided to yield. Morrison was appointed to carry the terms of capitulation, in which he demanded all the peltries in the fort belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company. This demand being rejected by the enemy, Bailey later in the evening sent Henry Kelsey with a proposition to retain a portion of their armament; this also was refused. There was now nothing for it but surrender. Iberville having granted an evacuation with bag and baggage the terms were accepted.

Evacuation of the English.

At one o'clock on the following day, therefore, the evacuation took place. Bailey, at the head of his garrison, a number of the crew of the wrecked *Hudson's Bay*, and six survivors of the *Hampshire*, marched forth from Fort York with drums beating, flag flying, and with arms and

THOMAS DOUGLAS, FIFTH EARL OF SELKIRK

From a bust in the possession of LORD SOUTHESK

baggage. They hardly knew whither they were to go, or what fate awaited them. They were surrounded by a vast and inhospitable region, and a winter long to be remembered for its severity had begun. But to the French who looked on it seemed as if their spirits were undaunted, and they set forth bravely.

The enemy watched the retreat of the defeated garrison not without admiration, and for the moment speculation was rife as to their fate. But it was only for the moment. Too rejoiced to contemplate anything but the termination of their own sufferings, the Canadians hastened to enter the fort, headed by Boisbriant, late an ensign in the service of the Compagnie du Nord. Fort Nelson was once more in the hands of the French.[1]

The Company was debarred from any attempt at reconquest, because of the Treaty[2] just concluded at

[1] "Ainsi le dernier poste," Garneau exclaims, "que les English avaient dans le baie d'Hudson tombé en notre pouvoir, et la France resta seule maitresse de cette region." (Tome ii., p. 137.) But Garneau overlooked the three forts in James's Bay retaken by the English in 1693; one of which, Fort Anne or Chechouan, he mistook for Fort Nelson. At any rate Fort Albany or Chechouan, remained in possession of the Company from 1693; and they never lost it. It was unsuccessfully attacked by Menthel in 1709.

[2] So strongly has the Treaty of Ryswick been interpreted in favour of France, that some historians merely state the fact that by it she retained all Hudson's Bay, and the places of which she was in possession at the beginning of the war. The commissioners having never met to try the question of right, things remained *in statu quo*. Now, whatever the commissioners might have done, had they ever passed judgment on the cause the Treaty provided they should try, they could not have given Fort Albany to the British, for it was one of the

Ryswick, which yielded the territory which had been the scene of so much commerce, action, and bloodshed to the subjects of the Most Christian King.

places taken by the French during the preceding peace, and retaken by the British during the war, and, therefore, adjudged in direct terms of the Treaty itself to belong to France. Thus, then, it will be seen, declared the opponents of the Company, that the only possession held by the Hudson's Bay Company during the sixteen years that intervened between the Treaty of Ryswick and the Treaty of Utrecht was one to which they had no right, and which the obligations of the Treaty required should be given up to France.—*Report of Ontario Boundary Commission.*

CHAPTER XV

1698–1713

PETITION PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT HOSTILE TO COMPANY—SEVENTEENTH CENTURY CONDITIONS OF TRADE—"COUREURS DE BOIS"—PRICE OF PELTRIES—STANDARD OF TRADE PRESCRIBED—COMPANY'S CONSERVATISM—LETTERS TO FACTORS—CHARACTER OF THE EARLY GOVERNORS—HENRY KELSEY—YORK FACTORY UNDER THE FRENCH—MASSACRE OF JÉRÉMIE'S MEN—STARVATION AMONGST THE INDIANS.

BEFORE the news of the catastrophe described in the last chapter could reach England, in April 1698, there was presented to Parliament a petition appealing against the confirmation of the privileges and trade granted to the Company in 1690.

The principal reason alleged for this action was the exorbitant price of beaver, which it was contended turned away an immense amount of Indian trade, which reverted to the French in Canada.

Another reason given was the undesirable monopoly which caused English dealers, while paying the highest prices for beaver, to get the worst article; the best travelling to Russia and other Continental countries. In this petition, concocted by enemies of the Company envious of its success, it was insinuated that the

Company's trade had been of no use save to increase the practice of stock-jobbing.

The Company replies to its enemies.

To this the Company made reply that "it was well known that the price of beaver had decreased one-third since its own establishment; and that themselves, far from hindering the trade, encouraged it by every means in their power, being anxious to be relieved of an overstocked commodity." Herein they referred to the enormous quantity of furs stored in their warehouse, for which, during the stringency of continued trade, they were obliged to retain and pay repeated taxes upon.[1] As for sending goods to Russia, it was only of late years that the Company had extended its trade to that and other foreign countries, and for no other cause than that reasonable prices could not be obtained in England.

Although two London guilds, the Skinners' Company and the Felt-makers' Company, joined issue with the Honourable Adventurers, the fate of the petition was sealed. On account of the misfortunes which had overtaken the Company, together with the presence of other and weightier matters, for Parliamentary consideration, the petition was laid on the table, and from the table it passed to the archives, where, together with the Act of 1690, it lay forgotten for a century and a half.

It will be diverting, at this juncture in the general

[1] "Six or seven times over," the Company say in their reply.

narrative, to glance at seventeenth century conditions of life and commerce in the domain of the Company.

Even at so early a period as 1690 was the method of transacting trade with the natives devised and regulated. The Indians brought down their goods, consisting of beavers, martens, foxes, and feathers to the Factory, and delivered them through a small aperture in the side of the storehouse. They entered the stockade three or four at a time; trading one by one at the window behind which two men officiated.

Method of trade with the Indians.

The whole of the actual trading of the Factory was in the hands of these two officials, known as traders. None other of the Company's servants at any fort were permitted to have direct intercourse with the Indians, save in exceptional circumstances. The trade was chiefly carried on in summer when the rivers were free from ice, although occasionally the natives in the immediate region of the factories came down in winter; the factors never refusing to trade with them when they so came. No partiality was shown to particular tribes, but the actual hunters were favoured more than those who merely acted as agents or carriers. It was not unusual for the chief factors, as the Governors came to be called after 1713, to make presents to the chiefs in order to encourage them to bring down as many as possible of their tribe in the ensuing year.

Before the era of the standard of trade, it was customary at all the forts, as it was at one or two

long afterwards, for remuneration for the furs of the savages to be left at the chief factor's discretion. Many things conspired to alter the values from season to season, and even from day to day; but no cause of such alteration was so potent as the contiguous rivalry of the French. When the French were close at hand in the vicinity of Fort Nelson, as they were from 1686 to 1693, the price of beaver fluctuated with surprising rapidity. It should be borne in mind that the western country at this period was frequented by roving, adventurous parties of *coureurs des bois*, whose activity in trade tended to injure the Company's business. Even an enactment by the French prescribing death for all persons trading in the interior of the country without a license, had proved insufficient to abate their numbers or their activity.

The Hudson's Bay Company had ample cognisance of this state of affairs, and were wont to put down much of the depredations it suffered at the hands of the French to the unkempt multitude of bushrangers, whom in one document it describes as "vagrants." La Chesnaye, who had been the leading spirit of the Quebec Company, was ready to impute to them many of the woes of the fur-trade, as well as the greater part of the unpleasant rivalries which had overtaken French and English in those parts. One day it would be carried like wild-fire amongst the tribe who had come to barter, that the French were giving a pound of powder for a beaver; that a gun could be bought

from the English for twelve beaver. In an instant there was a stampede outside the respective premises, and a rush would be made for the rival establishment. Fifty miles for a single pound of powder was nothing to these Indians, who had often journeyed two whole months in the depth of winter, enduring every species of toil and hardship, in order to bring down a small bundle of peltries; nor when he presented himself at the trader's window was the Indian by any means sure what his goods would bring. He delivered his bundles first, and the trader appraised them and gave what he saw fit. If a series of wild cries and bodily contortions ensued, the trader was made aware that the Indian was dissatisfied with his bargain, and the peltries were passed back through the aperture. This was merely a form; for rarely did the native make a practical repentance of his bargain, however unsatisfactory it might appear to him. It is true the Indian was constant in his complaint that too little was given for his furs; but no matter what the price had been this would have been the case. Apart from dissatisfaction being an ineradicable trait in the Indian character, the contemplation of the sufferings and privations he had undergone to acquire his string of beads, his blanket, or his hatchet, must have aroused in him all his stock of pessimism.

Activity of *coureurs des bois.*

In 1676 the value of the merchandise exported did not exceed £650 sterling. The value of the furs imported was close upon £19,000.

In 1678 the first standard was approved of by the Company on the advice of one of its governors, Sargeant, but it does not appear to have been acted upon for some years. The actual tariff was not fixed and settled to apply to any but Albany fort, and a standard was not filed at the Council of Trade until 1695. It originally covered forty-seven articles, later increased to sixty-three, and so remained for more than half a century. At first, as has been noted in an earlier chapter, the aborigines were content with beads and toys, and no doubt the bulk of the supplies furnished them might have continued for a very long period to consist of these baubles and petty luxuries had not the policy of the Company been to enrich the Indians (and themselves) by the arms and implements of the chase. Gradually the wants of the savages became wider, so that by the time, early in the eighteenth century, the French had penetrated into the far western country, these wants comprised many of the articles in common use amongst civilised peoples. The standard of trade alluded to was intended to cover the relative values at each of the Company's four factories. Yet the discrepancy existing between prices at the respective establishments was small. In 1718 a blanket, for example, would fetch six beavers at Albany and Moose, and seven at York and Churchill. In nearly every case higher prices were to be got from the tribes dealing at York and Churchill than from those at the other and more

Prices paid for furs.

easterly settlements, often amounting to as much as thirty-three per cent. This was illustrated in the case of shirts, for which three beavers were given in the West Main, and only a single beaver at East Main. The Company took fifteen beavers for a gun; whereas, when Verandrye appeared, he was willing to accept as small a number as eight. Ten beavers for a gun was the usual price demanded by the French. It may be observed that a distinguishing feature of the French trade in competition with the Company was that they dealt almost exclusively in light furs, taking all of that variety they could procure, the Indians bringing to the Company's settlements all the heavier furs, which the French refused at any price, owing to the difficulty of land transportation. These difficulties, in the case of the larger furs, were so great that it is related that upon innumerable occasions the savages themselves, when weakened by hunger, used to throw overboard all but mink, marten, and ermine skins rather than undergo the painful labour of incessant portages.

It must not be inferred from this, however, that the factors ever adhered strictly in practice to the standard prescribed and regulated from time to time by the Company. The standard was often privately doubled, where it could be done prudently, so that where the Company directed one skin to be taken for a given article, two were taken. The additional profit went, without the cognisance of the Company, into

the hands of the chief factor, and a smaller share to the two traders, and was called the overplus trade.

Occasionally, far-seeing, active spirits amongst its servants strove to break through the policy of conservatism which distinguished the Company; but where they succeeded it was only for a short period; and the commerce of the corporation soon reverted to its ancient boundaries. But this apparent attitude is capable of explanation. The Company were aware, almost from the first, that the trade they pursued was capable of great extension. One finds in the minute-books, during more than forty years from the time of Radisson and Groseilliers, partner after partner arising in his place to inquire why the commerce, vastly profitable though it was, remained stationary instead of increasing.

Stationary character of the Company's trade.

"Why are new tribes not brought down? Why do not our factors seek new sources of commerce?" A motion directing the chief factor to pursue a more active policy was often put and carried. But still the trade returns, year after year, remained as before. Scarce a season passed without exhortations to its servants to increase the trade. "Use more diligence," "prosecute discoveries," "draw down distant tribes," form the burden of many letters.

"We perceive," writes the Company's secretary in 1685 to Sargeant, "that our servants are unwilling to travel up into the country by reason of danger and want of encouragement. The danger, we judge, is not

more now than formerly; and for their encouragement we shall plentifully reward them, when we find they deserve it by bringing down Indians to our factories, of which you may assure them. We judge Robert Sandford a fit person to travel, having the linguæ and understanding the trade of the country; and upon a promise of Mr. Young (one of our Adventurers) that he should travel, for which reason we have advanced his wages to £30 per annum, and Mr. Arrington, called in the Bay, Red-Cap, whom we have again entertained in our service; as also John Vincent, both which we do also judge fit persons for you to send up into the country to bring down trade." To this the Governor replied that Sandford was by no means disposed to accept the terms their Honours proposed, but rather chose to go home. "Neither he nor any of your servants will travel up the country, although your Honours have earnestly desired it, and I pressed it upon those proposals you have hinted."

I have already shown why the Company's wishes in this respect were not fruitful; that the character of the men in the Company's employ was not yet adapted to the work in hand. Its servants were not easily induced to imperil their lives; they gained little in valour or hardihood from their surroundings. They were shut up in the forts, as sailors are shut up in a ship, scarcely ever venturing out in winter, and hardly ever holding converse with a savage in his wild state. In vain,

Character of the Company's factors.

for the most part, were such men stirred to enterprise; and so this choice and habit of seclusion grew into a rule with the Company's employees; and the discipline common to the ship, or to contracted bodies, became more and more stringent. The Company's policy was nearly always influenced by the advice of their factors, but it can be shown that these were not always wise, dreading equally the prospect of leading an expedition into the interior, and the prestige which might be gained in their despite were such an enterprise entrusted to a subordinate.

A discipline ludicrous when contrasted with the popular impressions concerning the fur-trader's career, was maintained in the early days. It was the discipline of the quarter-deck, and surprised many of the youth who had entered the Company's employ expecting a life of pleasure and indulgence. Many of the governors resembled Bridgar and Bailey in being surly, violent men, and were, indeed, often chosen for these qualities by the Company at home.

Is is singular but true, that in the days of our ancestors a choleric temper was often considered an unfailing index to the masterful man. In both branches of the King's service, on sea and on land, there seemed to have been no surer sign of a man's ability to govern and lead than spleen and tyranny; and many an officer owed his promotion and won the regard of the Admiralty and the War Office by his perpetual exhibition of the traits and vices of the

martinet. One of the Company's governors, Duffell, was wont to order ten lashes to his men on the smallest provocation. Another named Stanton, the governor at Moose Factory, declared he would whip any man, even to the traders, without trial if he chose; and this declaration he more than once put into practice. The whipping of two men, Edward Bate and Adam Farquhar, at Moose Factory, almost occasioned a mutiny there. The death of one Robert Pilgrim, from a blow administered by the chief factor, created a scandal some years later in the century. It was the practice of the early governors to strike the Indians when they lost their own tempers or for petty offences.

It is diverting to compare nineteenth century life at the factories, on its religious, moral, and intellectual side, to what obtained in the early days. In Governor Stanton's time, out of thirty-six men only six were able to read. There was neither clergyman nor divine worship. The men passed their time in eating and sleeping. Occasionally, Indian squaws were smuggled into the fort, at the peril of the Governor's displeasure, for immoral purposes. The displeasure of the Governor was not, however, excited on the grounds of morality, for it was nearly always the case that the Governor had a concubine residing on the premises or near at hand; and it was observed in 1749 by a servant of thirty years' standing in the Company's employ, that at each fort most of the

Life at the Company's factories.

half-breed children in the country claimed paternity of the one or other of the chief factors of the Company.

To return to the question of the extension of trade, there were from time to time governors and servants who evinced a zeal and love for adventure which contrasted favourably with that of their fellows. Their exploits, however, when compared with those of the hardier race of French-Canadian bushrangers, were tame enough. In 1673 Governor Bailey summoned all the servants of the fort to appear before him, and informed them that it was the Company's wish that some amongst them should volunteer to find out a site for a new fort. Three young men presented themselves, two of whom afterwards became governors of the Company. The names of these three were William Bond, Thomas Moore, and George Geyer. Some years later Bond was drowned in the Bay; but his two companions continued for some years to set an example which was never followed, and of which they seem finally to have repented. Indeed, almost without exception, once a fort was built the servants seem to have clung closely to it; and it was not until the year 1688 that a really brave, adventurous figure, bearing considerable resemblance to the bushrangers of the past, and the explorers of the future, emerges into light.

Henry Kelsey, a lad barely eighteen years of age, was the forerunner of all the hardy British pioneers of the ensuing century. He is described as active,

"delighting much in Indians' company; being never better pleased than when he is travelling amongst them." Young as he was, Kelsey volunteered to find out a site for a fort on Churchill River. No record exists of this voyage; but a couple of years later he repeated it, and himself kept a detailed diary of his tour.

Kelsey's Voyage.

In this journal the explorer states that he received his supplies on the 5th of July 1691. He had despatched a party of Assiniboines on in advance, and now set out to seek the remainder of their tribe. At one place it was the custom for the Indians to assemble when they went down the coast on trading expeditions. Kelsey soon overtook them, and accompanied them to the country of the "Naywatamee Poets," the journey consuming fifty-nine days. He travelled first by water seventy-one miles from Dering's Point, and there beached his canoes and continued by land a distance of three hundred and sixteen miles, passing through a wooded country. At the end of this he came upon prairie lands for forty-six miles, intersected by a small shallow river scarcely a hundred yards wide. Crossing ponds, woods, and champaign for eighty-one miles more, discovering many buffalo and beavers, the young explorer retraced his steps fifty-four miles, and there met the tribe of which he was in search. Kelsey did not accomplish this journey without meeting with many adventures. On one occasion the Naywatamee Poets left him asleep on the ground.

During his slumber the fire burnt the moss upon which he was lying and entirely consumed the stock of his gun, for which he was obliged to improvise from a piece of wood half dry. On another occasion, he and an Indian were surprised by a couple of grizzly bears. His companion made his escape to a tree, while Kelsey, his retreat cut off, hid himself in a clump of high willows. The bears perceiving the Indian in the branches made directly for him, but Kelsey observing their action, levelled his gun and killed one of the animals. The other bear bounded towards the place from which the shots came, and not finding the explorer, returned to the tree, when he was brought down by Kelsey's second shot. Good fortune attended this exploit, for it attained for the young man the name among the tribes of Miss-top-ashish, or "Little Giant." He returned to York Factory after this first expedition, apparelled after the manner of his Indian companions, while at his side trudged a young woman with whom he had gone through the ceremony of marriage after the Indian fashion. It was his wish that Mistress Kelsey should enter with her husband into the court, but this desire quickly found an opponent in the Governor, whose scruples, however, were soon undermined, on the explorer's flatly refusing to resume his place and duties in the establishment unless his Indian wife were admitted with him.

Thus, then, it is seen that in 1691, forty years

before Verandrye's voyages of discovery, this young servant of the Hudson's Bay Company, had penetrated to no slight extent into the interior. He had crossed the Assiniboine country, seen for the first time among English or Frenchmen the buffaloes of the plain, he had been attacked by the grizzly bears which belong to the far west; and in behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company had taken possession of the lands he had traversed, and secured for his masters the trade with Indians till then considered hostile.

Although the Governor hoped that the encouragement noted in the case of Kelsey, together with the advance of salary, would stimulate other young men to follow his example, yet, strange to say, none came forward. The day of the Henrys, the Mackenzies, the Thompsons, and the Frobishers had not yet dawned.

For many years after this the Company was in constant apprehension that its profits would be curtailed by tribal wars.

Effect of Indian wars on the Company's business.

"Keep the Indians from warring with one another, that they may have more time to look after their trade," was a frequently repeated injunction. "If you prevent them from fighting they will bring a larger quantity of furs to the Factory," they wrote on one occasion to Geyer. The Governor admitted the premise, "but," said he, "perhaps your Honours will tell me how I am going to do it." The Company devoted a whole meeting to consider the matter, and decided

that nothing was easier, provided their instructions were implicitly obeyed.

"Tell them what advantages they may make," they wrote; "that the more furs they bring, the more goods they will be able to purchase of us, which will enable them to live more comfortably and keep them from want in a time of scarcity. Inculcate better morals than they yet understand; tell them that it doth nothing advantage them to kill and destroy one another, that thereby they may so weaken themselves that the wild ravenous beasts may grow too numerous for them, and destroy them that survive." If Geyer delivered this message to the stern and valorous chiefs with whom he came in contact, they must have made the dome of heaven ring with scornful laughter. He was obliged to write home that fewer savages had come down than former seasons because they expected to be attacked by their enemies. The Company then responded shortly and in a business-like manner, that if fair means would not prevail to stop these inter-tribal conflicts, that the nation beginning the next quarrel was not to be supplied for a year with powder or shot, "which will expose them to their enemies, who will have the master of them and quite destroy them from the earth, them and their wives and children. This," adds the secretary, in a spirit of true prophecy, "must work some terror amongst them."

A potent cause contributed to the lack of prosperity which marked Port Nelson under the French *régime*.

It was the exploitation of the west by an army of traders and bushrangers. The new post of Michilimackinac had assumed all the importance as a fur-trading centre which had formerly belonged to Montreal. The French, too, were served by capable and zealous servants, none better than Iberville himself, the new Governor of the Mississippi country. His whole ambition continued to be centred upon driving out the English from the whole western and northern region, and destroying forever their trade and standing with the aborigines, and none more than he more ardently desired the suppression of the *coureur de bois*. "No Frenchmen," he declared, "should be allowed to follow the Indians in their hunts, as it tends to keep them hunters, as is seen in Canada; and when they are in the woods they do not desire to become tillers of the soil." [1]

The French at Michilimackinac.

At the same time the value of the bushrangers to the French *régime* was considerable in damaging the English interests in the Bay.

"It is certain," observed one of their defenders, "that if the articles required for the upper tribes be not sent to Michilimackinac, the Indians will go in search of them to Hudson's Bay, to whom they will convey all their peltries, and will detach themselves entirely from us."

[1] After the battle of Port Nelson, Iberville had returned to France, leaving Martigny in command of the Fort. His subsequent career may be read elsewhere; the Bay was no longer to be the theatre of his exploits. He perished in 1707 at Havana.

The bushrangers penetrated into the wilderness and intercepted the tribes, whose loyalty to the English was not proof against liquor and trinkets served on the spot, for which otherwise they would have to proceed many weary leagues to the Bay.

The Company came to be alarmed at the fashion in which the trade was sapped from its forts at Albany and Moose.[1] The Quebec Company was in the same plight with regard to Port Nelson.

The Western Company.

An association of French merchants, known as the Western Company, sprang up in the early days of the eighteenth century, and many forts and factories were built in the Mississippi region. Its promoters expected great results from a new skin until now turned to little account, that of the bison, great herds of which had been discovered roaming the western plains. M. de Juchereau, with thirty-four Canadians, established a post on the Wabash, in the name of the Western Company. Here, it was said, he collected in a short time fifteen thousand buffalo skins.

From 1697 to 1708 a series of three commandants were appointed, one of whom now administered the affairs at Fort Bourbon. But the post never assumed the importance which had attached to it under the English rule.

[1] At Albany they were surrounded by the French on every side, a circumstance which greatly sapped their commerce. Yet, even at this period, the importation of beaver and other peltries from the single fort remaining to them was above thirty thousand annually.

There is one romantic episode which belongs to this period, serving to relieve by its bright, perhaps too vivid colouring, the long sombreness of the French *régime*. It was the visit in 1704 of an officer named Lagrange and his suite from France. In the train of this banished courtier came a number of gallant youths and fair courtesans; and for one brief season Fort Bourbon rang with laughter and revelry. Hunting parties were undertaken every fine day; and many trophies of the chase were carried back to France. Have ever the generations of quiet English servants and Scotch clerks snatched a glimpse, in their sleeping or waking dreams, of those mad orgies, a voluptuous picture amidst an environment so sullen and prosaic?

In the year 1707 Jérémie, the lieutenant, obtained permission of the Company to return to France on leave. He succeeded in obtaining at court his nomination to the post of successor to the then commandant, Delisle. After a year's absence he returned to Port Nelson, to find matters fallen into a truly shocking state. No ships had arrived from France, and stores and ammunition were lacking. A few days after the new commandant's arrival, Delisle was taken seriously ill, and expired from the effects of cold and exposure.

For a period of six years Jérémie continued to govern Fort Bourbon, receiving his commission not from the Company but direct from the King himself, a fact of which he seems very proud.

Jérémie's tenure of office was marked by a bloody

affair, which fortunately had but few parallels under either English or French occupation. Although the tribes in the neighbourhood were friendly and docile, they were still capable, upon provocation, to rival those Iroquois who were a constant source of terror to the New England settlers.

In August 1708, Jérémie sent his lieutenant, two traders, and six picked men of his garrison to hunt for provisions. They camped at nightfall near a band of savages who had long fasted and lacked powder, which, owing to its scarcity, the French did not dare give them.

Heaped round about these unhappy savages, who loudly lamented the passing of the English dominion when powder and shot were plenty, were the furs which to them were useless. They had journeyed to the fort in all good faith, as was their custom, across mountain and torrent, only to find their goods rejected by the white men of the fort, who told them to wait. When the French hunting party came to encamp near them, several of the younger braves amongst the Indians crept up to where they feasted, and returned with the news to their comrades. The tribe, fired with resentment, and exasperated by the cruelty of their fate, hatched a plan of vengeance and rapine. Two of their youngest and comeliest women entered the assemblage of the white men, and by seductive wiles drew two of them away to their own lodges. The remaining six, having eaten and drunk

their fill, believed in their security, and turned to slumber. Hardly had the pair of roysterers arrived at the Indian camp than instead of the cordial privacy they expected, they were confronted by two score famished men drawn up in front of the lodges, knives in hand or brandishing hatchets. All unarmed as they were, the savages unceremoniously seized and slew them. No trace was ever found of their bodies, which were, although denied by one eye-witness of the tragedy, a squaw, probably devoured on the spot. The younger men now stole again to the French camp, where they massacred all the others in their sleep, save one, who being wounded feigned death, and after having been with his dead comrades stripped to the skin, managed to crawl off. In this naked state, and half-covered with blood, he made his way back to the fort. The distance being ten leagues, his survival was a matter of wonder, even to those hardy men of the wilderness.

Indian treachery.

The Governor naturally apprehended that the Indians would attempt to follow up their crime by an attack upon the fort.

As only nine men remained in the garrison, it was felt impossible to defend both Fort Bourbon and the small auxiliary establishment near by. He therefore withdrew the men hastily from the little Fort Philipeaux, and none too quickly, for the Indians came immediately before it. Finding nobody in charge they wrought a speedy and vigorous pillage, taking

many pounds of powder which Jérémie had not had time to transfer to Bourbon.

The condition of the French during the winter of 1708–9 was pitiable in the extreme. Surrounded by starving, bloodthirsty savages, with insufficient provisions, and hardly ever daring to venture out, they may well have received with joy the tidings that the indomitable English Company had re-established a Factory some leagues distant, and were driving a brisk trade with the eager tribes.

It was not until 1713 that the French Fur Company succeeded in relieving its post of Fort Bourbon. It had twice sent ships, but these had been intercepted on the high seas by the English and pillaged or destroyed. The *Providence* arrived the very year of the Treaty of Utrecht.

But wretched as was the case of the French, that of the Indians was lamentable indeed. A few more years of French occupation and the forests and rivers of the Bay would know its race of hunters no more. Many hundreds lay dead within a radius of twenty leagues from the fort, the flesh devoured from their bones. They had lost the use of the bow and arrow since the advent of the Europeans, and they had no resources as cultivators of the soil; which besides their errant life forbade. Pressed by a long-endured hunger, parents had killed their children for food; the strong had devoured the weak. One of these unhappy victims of civilisation

Starvation amongst the Indians.

and commercial rivalry, confessed to the commandant that he had eaten his wife and six children. He declared that he had not experienced the pangs of tenderness until he had slain and half-devoured his youngest child, whom he loved more than the others. He had arisen and gone away weeping, after burying the rest of the body in the earth.

CHAPTER XVI

1697–1712

COMPANY SERIOUSLY DAMAGED BY LOSS OF PORT NELSON—SEND AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR CLAIMS TO LORDS OF TRADE—DEFINITE BOUNDARY PROPOSITIONS OF TRADE—LEWIS ANXIOUS TO CREATE BOUNDARIES—COMPANY LOOK TO OUTBREAK OF WAR—WAR OF SPANISH SUCCESSION BREAKS OUT—PERIOD OF ADVERSITY FOR THE COMPANY—EMPLOYMENT OF ORKNEYMEN—ATTACK ON FORT ALBANY—DESPERATE CONDITION OF THE FRENCH AT YORK FORT—PETITION TO ANNE.

THE Treaty of Ryswick[1] had aimed a severe blow at

[1] By the Treaty of Ryswick, Great Britain and France were respectively to deliver up to each other generally whatever possessions either held before the outbreak of the war, and it was specially provided that this should be applicable to the places in Hudson's Bay taken by the French during the peace which preceded the war, which, though retaken by the British during the war, were to be given up to the French. Commissioners were to be appointed in pursuance of the Treaty to determine the rights and pretensions which either nation had to the places in Hudson's Bay. But these commissioners never met. The commissioners must, however, have been bound by the text of the Treaty wherever it was explicit. They *might*, said the Company's opponents, have decided that France had a right to the whole, but they could *not* have decided that Great Britain had a right to the whole. They would have been compelled to make over to France all the places she took during the peace which preceded the war, for in that the Treaty left them no discretion. The following are the words of the Treaty: "But the possession of those places which were taken by the French, during the peace that preceded this present war, and were retaken by the English during the war, shall be

the prosperity of the Company,[1] by depriving them of that important quarter of the Bay known as Port Nelson.

Although now on the threshold of a long period of adversity, the Merchants-Adventurers, losing neither hope nor courage, continued to raise their voice for restitution and justice. Petition after petition found its way to King, Commons, and the Lords of Trade and Plantations.

In May 1700, the Company were requested by the

left to the French by virtue of the foregoing article." Thus the Treaty of Ryswick recognised and confirmed the right of France to certain places in Hudson's Bay distinctly and definitely, but it recognised no right at all on the part of Great Britain; it merely provided a tribunal to try whether she had any or not.

[1] "Therefore, we shall proceed to inform your Lordships of the present melancholy prospects of our trade and settlement in Hudson's Bay, and that none of his Majesty's plantations are left in such a deplorable state as those of this Company, for by their great losses by the French, both in times of peace as well as during the late war, together with the hardships they lie under by the late Treaty of Ryswick, they may be said to be the only mourners by the peace. They cannot but inform your Lordships that the only settlement that the Company now have left in Hudson's Bay (of seven they formerly possessed) is Albany Fort, vulgarly called Checheawan, in the bottom of the said Bay, where they are surrounded by the French on every side, viz., by their settlements on the lakes and rivers from Canada to the northwards, towards Hudson's Bay, as also from Port Nelson (Old York Fort) to the southward; but beside this, the Company have, by the return of their ship this year, received certain intelligence that the French have made another settlement at a place called New Severn, 'twixt Port Nelson and Albany Fort, whereby they have hindered the Indians from coming to trade at the Company's factory, at the bottom of the Bay, so that the Company this year have not received above one-fifth part of the returns they usually had from thence, insomuch that the same doth not answer the expense of their expedition."

Lords of Trade and Plantations to send an account of the encroachments of the French on her Majesty's Dominion in America within the limits of the Company's charter; to which the Company replied, setting forth their right and title, and praying restitution.

The Company's claims.

It has been stated, and urged as a ground against the later pretensions of the Hudson's Bay Company, that at this time they were willing to contract their limits. While disposed to do this for the purpose of effecting a settlement, it was only on condition of their not being able to obtain "the whole Straits and Bay which of right belongs to them."

"This," remarked a counsel for the Company in a later day, "is like a man who has a suit of ejectment, who, in order to avoid the expense and trouble of a lawsuit, says, 'I will be willing to allow you certain bounds, but if you do not accept that I will insist on getting all my rights and all that I am entitled to.'" The Company's propositions soon began to take a definite form. One of their memorials is well worthy of being here transcribed. It is addressed to the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, and is entitled:—

THE COMPANY'S CLAIMS AFTER THE TREATY OF RYSWICK.

The limits which the Hudson's Bay Company conceive to be necessary as boundaries between the French and them in case of an exchange of places, and that the Company cannot

obtain the whole Streights and Bay, which of right belongs to them, viz. :—

1. That the French be limited not to trade by wood-runners, or otherwise, nor build any House, Factory, or Fort, beyond the bounds of 53 degrees, or Albany River, vulgarly called Chechewan, to the northward, on the west or main coast.

2. That the French be likewise limited not to trade by wood-runners, or otherwise, nor build any House, Factory, or Fort, beyond Rupert's River, to the northward, on the east or main coast.

3. On the contrary, the English shall be obliged not to trade by wood-runners, or otherwise, nor build any House, Factory, or Fort, beyond the aforesaid latitude of 53 degrees, or Albany River, vulgarly called Chechewan, south-east towards Canada, on any land which belongs to the Hudson's Bay Company.

4. As also the English be likewise obliged not to trade by wood-runners, or otherwise, nor build any House, Factory, or Fort, beyond Rupert's River, to the south-east, towards Canada, on any land which belongs to the Hudson's Bay Company.

5. As likewise, that neither the French or English shall at any time hereafter extend their bounds contrary to the aforesaid limitations, nor instigate the natives to make war, or join with either, in any acts of hostility to the disturbance or detriment of the trade of either nation, which the French may very reasonably comply with, for that they by such limitations will have all the country south-eastward betwixt Albany Fort and Canada to themselves, which is not only the best and most fertile part, but also a much larger tract of land than can be supposed to be to the northward, and the Company deprived of that which was always their undoubted right.

And unless the Company can be secured according to these propositions, they think it will be impossible for them to continue long at York Fort (should they exchange with the French), nor will the trade answer their charge; and therefore

if your lordships cannot obtain these so reasonable propositions from the French, but that they insist to have the limits settled between [Albany and] York and Albany Fort, as in the latitude of 55 degrees or thereabouts, the Company can by no means agree thereto, for they by such an agreement will be the instruments of their own ruin, never to be retrieved.

By order of the General Court,

Wm. Potter, *Secretary.*

Confirmed by the General Court
of the said Company,
10*th July* 1700.

The Adventurers were, they said, not indisposed to listen to reason. They proposed limits to be observed by the two nations in their trade and possessions in the Bay. But should the French be so foolish as to refuse their offer, then they would not be bound by that or any former concession, but would then, as they had always theretofore done, "insist upon the prior and undoubted right to the whole of the Bay and straits."

The Court of Versailles was now most anxious to delimit the boundaries of the respective possessions of the two countries in the Bay. To this end, proposals were exchanged between the two crown governments.

Lewis proposes boundaries.

One alternative proposed by the French Ambassador was that the Weenisk River, which was exactly half way between Fort Bourbon and Fort Albany, should mark the respective limits of the French on the east, while the limits of New France on the side of Acadia should be restricted to the River St. George.

This proposition having been referred to them, the Board of Trade and Plantations discouraged the scheme. The Hudson's Bay Adventurers, it said, challenged an undoubted right to the whole Bay, antecedent to any pretence of the French. It was, therefore, requisite that they should be consulted before any concession of territories could be made to the Most Christian King or his subjects.

The Company pinned their hopes to an outbreak of hostilities,[1] which would enable them to attempt to regain what they had lost. A protracted peace was hardly looked for by the nation. In answer to Governor Knight's continual complaints, to which were added those of the dispossessed Geyer, the Company begged its servants to bide their time; and to exert themselves to the utmost to increase the trade at Albany, and Moose, and Rupert's River.

"England," says a popular historian, "was still

[1] "The Company being by these and other misfortunes reduced to such a low and miserable condition, that, without his Majesty's favour and assistance, they are in no ways able to keep that little remainder they are yet possessed of in Hudson's Bay, but may justly fear in a short time to be deprived of all their trade in those parts which is solely negotiated by the manufacturers of this kingdom. Upon the whole matter, the Company humbly conceive, they can be no ways safe from the insults and encroachments of the French, so long as they are suffered to remain possessed of any place in Hudson's Bay, and that in order to dislodge them from thence (which the Company are no ways able to do) a force of three men-of-war, one bomb-vessel, and two hundred and fifty soldiers besides the ships' company will be necessary, whereby that vast tract of land which is of so great concern, not only to this Company in particular, but likewise to the whole nation in general, may not be utterly lost to this kingdom."

clinging desperately to the hope of peace, when Lewis, by a sudden act, forced it into war. He had acknowledged William as King in the Peace of Ryswick, and pledged himself to oppose all the attacks on his throne. He now entered the bed-chamber at St. Germain, where James was breathing his last, and promised to acknowledge his son at his death as King of England, Scotland, and Ireland."

Such a promise was tantamount to a declaration of war, and in a moment England sprang to arms. None were so eager for the approaching strife than the Honourable Merchants-Adventurers. They expressed their opinion that, while their interests had undoubtedly suffered at the peace of 1697, they were far from attributing it to any want of care on the part of his Majesty. Their rights and claims, they said, were then "overweighed by matters of higher consequence depending in that juncture for the glory and honour of the King."

Outbreak of the war between England and France.

Alas! a dozen more years were to elapse before they were to come into their own again; and during that critical period much was to happen to affect their whole internal economy. The value of the shares fell; the original Adventurers were all since deceased, and many of their heirs had disposed of their interests. A new set of shareholders appeared on the scene; not simultaneously, but one by one, until almost the entire personnel of the Company had

yielded place to a new, by no means of the same weight or calibre.[1]

Mention has already been made of the manner in which the Company devoted its thought and energy to its weekly meetings. Not even in the gravest crises to which the East India Company was subjected, was there a statute more inconvenient or severe, than the following: "Resolved and ordered by the Committee to prevent the Company's business from being delayed or neglected, that for the future if any member do not appear by one hour after the time mentioned in the summons and the glass run out, or shall depart without leave of the Committee, such member shall have no part in the moneys to be divided by the Committee, and that the time aforesaid be determined by the going of the clock in the Court-room, which the Secretary is to set as he can to the Exchange clock; and that no leave shall be given until one hour after the glass is run out."

But out of their adversity sprang a proposition which, although not put into effect upon a large scale until many years afterwards, yet well deserves to be recorded here. To stem the tide of desertion from the Company's service, caused by the war, and the low rate of wages, it was in 1710 first suggested that youthful Scotchmen be employed.[2]

[1] The Duke of York's (James II.) share, however, was retained by his heirs up to 1746.

[2] "Captain John Merry is desired to speak with Captain Moody, who has a nephew in the Orkneys, to write to him to provide fifteen or

The scarcity of servants seems to have continued. In the following year greater bribes were resorted to. "Captain Mounslow was now ordered to provide fifteen or sixteen young able men to go to H. B. This expedition for five years, which he may promise to have wages, viz.: £8 the 1st year; £10 the 2nd; £12 the 3rd, and £14 for the two last years, and to be advanced £3 each before they depart from Gravesend." The result of this was that in June 1711, the first batch of these servants came aboard the Company's ship at Stromness. But they were not destined to sail away to the Bay in their full numbers. Overhauled by one of her Majesty's ships, eleven of the young men were impressed into the service. For many years after this incident it was not found easy to engage servants in the Orkneys.

Employment of Scotchmen in the service.

Captain Barlow was Governor at Albany Fort in 1704 when the French came overland from Canada to besiege it. The Canadians and their Indian guides lurked in the neighbourhood of Albany for several days before they made the attack, killing many of the cattle that were grazing in the marshes. A faithful Home Indian (as those Crees in the vicinity were always termed), who was on a hunting excursion, discovered the strangers, and correctly supposing them to be enemies, returned in haste to the fort to inform

sixteen young men, about twenty years old, to be entertained by the Company, to serve them for four years in Hudson's Bay, at the rate of £6 per annum, the wages formerly given by the Company."—From the Company's Order Book, 29th February 1710.

THE RIGHT HON. EDWARD ELLICE

From a lithograph

the Governor of the circumstance. While giving little credit to the report, Barlow yet took every measure for the fort's defence. Orders were given to the master of the Company's sloop hard by to hasten to the fort when he should hear the firing of a gun.

In the middle of the night the French came before the fort, and marching boldly up to the gate demanded entrance. Barlow, who was on watch, told them that the Governor was asleep, but that he would go for the keys at once. The French, on hearing this, and expecting no resistance, flocked up to the gate as close together as they could stand. Barlow took advantage of this opportunity; instead of opening the gate he opened two port-holes, and discharged the contents of two six-pounders into the enemy. This quantity of grape-shot slaughtered great numbers of the French, and amongst them their commander, who was an Irishman.[1]

A precipitate retreat followed such an unexpected reception; and the master of the sloop hearing the firing proceeded with the greatest haste to the spot. His zeal and obedience were to be ill-rewarded. Some of the enemy, who lay in ambush on the river's bank, intercepted and killed him, with his entire crew.

Seeing no chance of surprising the fort, the French retired reluctantly, and did not renew the attack; although some of them were heard shooting in the neighbourhood for ten days after their repulse. One

[1] The name of this "first Fenian" was reported to the Company as Mendall or Mendenhall. By the French it is given as Menthel.

man in particular was observed to walk up and down the platform leading from the gate of the fort to the launch for a whole day. At sundown Fullerton, the Governor, thinking his conduct extraordinary, ventured out and spoke to the man in French. He offered him lodgings within the fort if he chose to accept them; but to such and similar proposals the man made no reply, merely shaking his head. Fullerton then informed him that unless he would surrender himself as his prisoner there would be no alternative but to shoot him. Notwithstanding this warning the man advanced nearer the fort. The Governor kept his word, and the unhappy Frenchman fell, pierced by a bullet. No explanation of such eccentric behaviour was ever forthcoming, but it may be that the hardships the poor fellow expected to encounter on his return to Canada had unbalanced his mind, and while scorning surrender made death seem preferable.

It was some solace to the Company to know that their French rivals were in trouble, and that York Factory had hardly proved as great a source of profit to the French as had been anticipated. The achievements of Iberville and his brothers had done little, as has been shown, to permanently better the fortunes of the Quebec Company. To such an extent had these declined, that the capture, in 1704, of its principal ship by an English frigate, forced the traders who composed it to invoke the assistance of the Mother Country in providing them with facilities for the relief

of the forts and the transportation of the furs to France. We know already that the garrison at Fort Bourbon nearly perished for lack of provisions. The assistance was given; but two years later it was discontinued, because they could no longer spare either ships or men, both being urgently needed for defence against the New Englanders. Owing to the enormous increase of unlicensed bushrangers, the continued hostilities and the unsettled state of the country, no small proportion of the entire population chose rather to adventure the perils of illicit trade in the wilderness, than to serve the King in the wars at home.[1] Unaccustomed for so long a period to till the soil, their submission was not easily secured, no matter how dire the penalties.

Desperate condition of the French at Fort York.

Finding their continual petitions to the Lords of Trade ineffectual, the Company now drew up one even more strongly worded which they presented to Queen Anne herself. The memorial differed from any other, inasmuch as the Company now lay stress for the first time on some other feature of their commerce than furs.

"The said country doth abound with several other commodities (of which your petitioners have not been able to begin a trade, by reason of the interruptions they have met with from the French) as of whale-bone, whale-oil (of which last your subjects now purchase

[1] "This country," it was remarked in 1710, "is composed of persons of various character and different inclinations. One and the other ought to be managed, and can contribute to render it flourishing."

from Holland and Germany to the value of £26,000 per annum, which may be had in your own dominions), besides many other valuable commodities, which in time may be discovered."

If the French, it was argued, came to be entirely possessed of Hudson's Bay, they would undoubtedly give up whale fishing in those parts, which would greatly tend to the increase of their navigation and to their breed of seamen.

"When your Majesty, in your high wisdom, shall think fit to give peace to those enemies whom your victorious arms have so reduced and humbled, and when your Majesty shall judge it for your people's good to enter into a treaty of peace with the French King, your petitioners pray that the said Prince be obliged by such treaty, to renounce all right and pretensions to the Bay and Streights of Hudson, to quit and surrender all posts and settlements erected by the French, or which are now in their possession, as likewise not to sail any ships or vessels within the limits of the Company's charter, and to make restitution of the £108,514, 19s. 8d., of which they robbed and despoiled your petitioners in times of perfect amity between the two Kingdoms."

This petition seems actually to have come into the hands of the Queen and to have engaged her sympathy, for which the Honourable Adventurers had to thank John Robinson, the Lord Bishop of London.[1] This dignitary, *persona grata* in the highest degree to the

[1] I find the following in the minute books, under date of 24th March 1714. "It was resolved that the Committee when they meet Friday come Senuit, do agree to wait on the Lord Bishop of London, in order to return him the thanks of this Company for the care that has been taken of them by the Treaty of Ryswick."

sovereign, was also a close personal friend of the Lake family, whose fortunes were long bound up with the Hudson's Bay Company. The Company was asked to state what terms it desired to make. In great joy they acceded to the request.[1]

[1] To the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of Trades and Plantations.

The Memorandum of the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay.

That for avoiding all disputes and differences that may, in time to come, arise between the said Company and the French, settled in Canada, they humbly represent and conceive it necessary—

That no wood-runners, either French or Indians, or any other person whatsoever, be permitted to travel, or seek for trade, beyond the limits hereinafter mentioned.

That the said limits began from the island called Grimington's Island, or Cape Perdrix, in the latitude of 58½° north, which they desire may be the boundary between the English and the French, on the coast of Labrador, towards Rupert's Land on the east main, and Novia Britannia on the French side, and that no French ship, bark, boat, or vessel whatsoever, shall pass to the northward of Cape Perdrix, or Grimington's Island, towards or into the Streights of Bay or Hudson, on any pretence whatever.

That a line be supposed to pass to the south-westward of the said Island of Grimington or Cape Perdrix to the great Lake Miscosinke, *alias* Mistoveny, dividing the same into two parts (as in the map now delivered), and that the French, nor any others employed by them, shall come to the north or north-westward of the said lake, or supposed line, by land or water, or through any rivers, lakes, or countries, to trade, or erect any forts or settlements whatsoever, and the English, on the contrary, not to pass the said supposed line either to the southward or eastward.

Demand of the Company.

That the French be likewise obliged to quit, surrender, and deliver up to the English, upon demand, York Fort (by them called Bourbon), undemolished; together with all forts, factories, settlements, and buildings whatsoever, taken from the English, or since erected or

NOTE.—A List of the Company's principal Forts from 1668 to 1712 may prove serviceable to the reader. They were:—

1. Rupert, called by the French St. Jacques. Founded 1668 by Gillam. Taken by the French under Troyes and Iberville, July 1686. Retaken by the English, 1693.

2. Fort Monsippi, Monsonis, St. Lewis and Moose Fort, taken by Troyes and Iberville 20th June 1686. Retaken 1693.

3. Fort Chechouan, St. Anne or Albany, taken by De Troyes and Iberville in 1686. Retaken 1693.

4. New Severn or Nieu Savanne, taken by Iberville, 1690.

5. Fort Bourbon, Nelson or York. Founded 1670. Taken by the French, 1682, acting for English, 1684. Retaken by Iberville, 12th October 1894. Retaken by the English, 1696, and by the French, 1697.

6. Fort Churchill, 1688.

7. East Main.

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built by the French, with all the artillery and ammunition, in the condition they are now in; together with all other places they are possessed of within the limits aforesaid, or within the Bay and Streights of Hudson.

These limits being first settled and adjusted, the Company are willing to refer their losses and damages formerly sustained by the French in time of peace, to the consideration of commissioners to be appointed for that purpose.

By order of the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay.

HUDSON'S BAY HOUSE,
7th of February 1711-12.

CHAPTER XVII

1712–1720

QUEEN ANNE ESPOUSES THE CAUSE OF THE COMPANY—PRIOR'S VIEW OF ITS WANTS—TREATY OF UTRECHT—JOY OF THE ADVENTURERS—PETITION FOR ACT OF CESSION—NOT PRESSED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT—GOVERNOR KNIGHT AUTHORISED TO TAKE POSSESSION OF PORT NELSON—"SMUG ANCIENT GENTLEMEN"—COMMISSIONERS TO ASCERTAIN RIGHTS—THEIR MEETING IN PARIS—MATTERS MOVE SLOWLY—BLADEN AND PULTENEY RETURN TO ENGLAND.

AT last had the Company triumphed. Its rights were now admitted; and the Queen and her ministers were convinced of the justice of its claims.[1] Peace,

[1] THE LORDS OF TRADE TO THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH.

To the Right Honourable the Earl of Dartmouth.

MY LORD,—In obedience to her Majesty's commands, signified to us, we have considered the enclosed petition from the Hudson's Bay Company to her Majesty, and are humbly of opinion that the said Company have a good right and just title to the whole Bay and Streights of Hudson.

Since the receipt of which petition, the said Company have delivered us a memorial, relating to the settlement of boundaries between them and the French of Canada, a copy whereof is enclosed, and upon which we take leave to offer, that as it will be for the advantage of the said Company that their boundaries be settled, it will also be necessary that the boundaries between her Majesty's colonies on the continent of America and the said French of Canada be likewise agreed and settled; wherefore we

Answer of the Lords of Trade.

long and anxiously awaited, began to dawn over the troubled horizon. Lewis and his courtiers had long sickened of the war: and at the Flemish town of Utrecht negotiations were on foot for a cessation of hostilities and the adjustment of differences between the crowns of England and France.[1]

These negotiations finally resulted in a treaty signed on the 31st of March (O.S.), 1713, by which the whole of Hudson's Bay was ceded to Great Britain without any distinct definition of boundaries, for the determining of which commissioners were to be appointed.

On the news of the conclusion of the Treaty, the Adventurers were filled with joy. The Committee was in session when a messenger came hot haste from Whitehall to bear the glad tidings. A General Court was convoked several days later. Plans were

humbly offer these matters may be recommended to her Majesty's Plenipotentiaries at Utrecht.—We are, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient, and most humble servants,

WINCHELSEA,	GEO. BAILLIE,
PH. MEADOWS,	ARTH. MOORE,
CHAS. TURNER,	FRA. GWYN.

WHITEHALL, *February* 19, 1711–12.

[1] The view which Matthew Prior, the English plenipotentiary, took of the Company's rights was not one, however, inspired by that body. He wanted the trade of Rupert's Land, rather than the sovereignty.

"I take leave to add to your lordship," he observes at the end of a communication addressed to the Secretary of State, "that these limitations are not otherwise advantageous or prejudicial to Great Britain than as we are both better or worse with the native Indians; and that the whole is a matter rather of industry than of dominion."

concerted for securing the very most that the circumstances would allow. It was recognised as necessary to secure a copy of the Act of Cession which it was supposed would be issued by Lewis, ceding to Great Britain the places on Hudson's Bay, the Company being regarded merely in the light of ordinary subjects. Without this document they would of course be powerless to act with authority in the Bay: or to enforce the restoration of their forts. Many of the members wished to press at once for pecuniary compensation, but the wiser heads agreed that this would best be a matter for subsequent negotiation. Many thought indeed that perhaps there need be no haste in the matter, as the interest on the original estimate of damages, already nearly double the principal, was growing daily at an enormous rate.

Effect of the Treaty on the Company.

"As to the Company's losses," says a memorandum of this year, "it will appear by a true and exact estimate that the French took from the Company in full peace between 1682 and 1688 seven ships, with their cargoes, and six forts and caches in which were carried away great stores of goods laid up for trading with the Indians. The whole amounts to £38,332 15s., and £62,210 18s. 9d. interest, computed to 1713." But the year passed without the Hudson's Bay Company claims being taken up by Government.

Under date of 30th July 1714, occurs the following: "The Committee having received a letter from

the Lords Commissioners of Trade, and they desiring their attendance on Tuesday next, and to bring in writing the demands of the Co. for damages rec'd from the French in times of peace pursuant to the 10th & 11th Articles of the Treaty of Utrecht. Upon which the Secretary is ordered to Copy out the Abstract of the whole damage sustained, amounting to with Interest the sum of £100,543–13–9; as likewise the particulars in these small volumes in order to present the same to the Commission of Trade on Wednesday next."

Company's claim for compensation.

It does not seem to have been doubted but that the Queen, if petitioned, would grant the Company's request for a copy of the Act of Cession, in time to send an expedition to the Bay that very year.[1]

Nevertheless, while vessels were being acquired, fitted out and loaded with cargoes, the Company was wise

[1] The Company's Petition to Queen Anne for Act of Cession.

To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty :—

The humble petition of the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay, sheweth :

That your petitioners, being informed that the Act of Cession is come over, whereby (among other matters thereby concerted) the French King obliges himself to restore to your Majesty (or to whom your Majesty shall appoint to take possession thereof) the Bay and Streights of Hudson, as also all forts and edifices whatsoever, entire and demolished, together with guns, shot, powder, and other warlike provisions (as mentioned in the 10th article of the present treaty of peace), within six months after the ratification thereof, or sooner, if possible it may be done.

Your petitioners do most humbly pray your Majesty will be graciously

enough not to run the risk of falling into a trap. Nothing would be done without the fullest royal authority. It was not at all likely that the French at Port Nelson would recognise mere word of mouth.

It is worthy of remark as illustrating how much the Company trusted the Canadian authorities, Bolingbroke (May 29, 1713) reminded the Duke of Shrewsbury (then at Paris) that in Pontchartrain's letter to the Marquis de Vaudreuil, Governor of Canada, the latter was directed to yield the forts and settlements belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company: "But this order the Merchants thought would hardly fulfil their requirements. They were despatching two ships to the Bay. It would therefore be better if his Grace obtained direct order to M. Jérémie in duplicate."

But the Act of Cession eagerly awaited by the Company was not then forthcoming, or at any time subsequently. The Queen's advisers were in this matter

pleased to direct the said Act of Cession may be transmitted to your petitioners, as also your Majesty's commission to Captain James Knight and Mr. Henry Kelsey, gentleman, to authorise them, or either of them, to take possession of the premises above mentioned, and to constitute Captain James Knight to be Governor of the fortress called Fort Nelson, and all other forts and edifices, lands, seas, rivers, and places aforesaid; and the better to enable your petitioners to recover the same, they humbly pray your Majesty to give orders that they may have a small man-of-war to depart with their ships, by the 12th of June next ensuing, which ship may in all probability return in the month of October.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, shall ever pray.

By order of the Company.

per WM. POTTER, *Secretary.*

wiser than anybody else. Lord Dartmouth's letter[1] of the 27th May 1713, enclosing the petition of the Hudson's Bay Company, shows what was the design in not accepting an Act of Cession from the French King. Her Majesty insisted only upon an order from the French Court for delivering possession; "by which means the title of the Company was acknowledged, and they will come into the immediate enjoyment of their property without further trouble."

No Act of Cession.

The summer of 1713 came on apace, and it was soon too late to think of occupying Port Nelson that year. But all was made ready for the next season. On the 5th of June 1714, many of the Adventurers repaired to Gravesend, in order to wish Governor Knight and his deputy, Henry Kelsey, godspeed. "The Committee," we read in the minutes, "delivered to Captain Knight, her Majesty's Royal Commission, to take possession (for the Company) of York Fort, and all other places within the Bay and Straits of Hudson. Also another Commission from her Majesty

[1] "My Lords and Gentlemen,—The Queen has commanded me to transmit to you the enclosed petition of the Hudson's Bay Company, that you may consider of it and report your opinion what orders may properly be given upon the several particulars mentioned. In the meantime I am to acquaint you that the places and countries therein named, belonging of right to British subjects, her Majesty did not think fit to receive any Act of Cession from the French King, and has therefore insisted only upon an order from that Court for delivering possession to such persons as should be authorised by her Majesty to take it; by this means the title of the Company is acknowledged, and they will come into the immediate enjoyment of their property without further trouble."

constituting him Governor under the Company, and Mr. H. Kelsey, Deputy Governor of the Bay and Straits of Hudson, aforesaid."

Knight took with him, likewise, "the French King's order under his hand and seal, to Mons. Jérémie, Commander at York Fort, to deliver the same to whom her Majesty should appoint, pursuant to the Treaty of Utrick."

Knight's eyes, now dimmed with age, were gladdened by the sight of Port Nelson, his ancient command, on the 25th of July. Jérémie was already advised by the French ship, and no time was lost in evacuation. A bargain was made for such buildings and effects as the French had no further use for, which had been beforehand arranged. "From his particular regard for the Queen of Great Britain, the King will leave to her the artillery and ammunition in the forts and places in Hudson's Bay and Straits, notwithstanding the urgent reasons his Majesty has to withdraw them, and to appropriate them elsewhere." The cannon were accordingly left.

Regulation of boundary.

By Article X. of the Treaty of Utrecht it was proposed, in order to avoid all further conflict and misunderstanding, that commissioners should be appointed to regulate the boundaries of Hudson's Bay and the extent of the trade thereof, which should be enjoyed by each.[1] But no great

[1] In 1714 the Hudson's Bay Company sent a memorandum to the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, accompanied by a

haste was apparent on the part of France to secure this end. For several years nothing was done in the matter, save and except the continuous exchange of letters between the two ambassadors. There is a letter of Bolingbroke's which evinces the feeling current in diplomatic circles at the time.

"There is nothing more persistent in the world," he says, "than these claims of the Hudson's Bay Company. We are desirous greatly to see all these smug ancient gentlemen satisfied; notwithstanding which we are unable to budge an inch. The truth of the business seems to me to be that the French are always hoping that their ultimate concessions will be less, and the English that these concessions will be vastly more."

Lewis had consented, at the time of the peace, to name two commissioners who should give possession to such of the English, as proved that they were actual proprietors, or the heirs of proprietors, of those who had in a former time possessed property in the Bay. While this seemed to provide for the Company's rights in a manner most satisfactory, nevertheless matters dragged on, and it was not until 1719 that a practical movement was made. On the 3rd of

map in which they claimed that the eastern boundary should be a line running from Grimington's Island through Lake Miscosinke or Mistassinnie, and from the said lake by a line run south-westward into 49 degrees north latitude, as by the red line may more particularly appear, and that that latitude be the limit; that the French do not come to the north of it, nor the English to the south of it,

September of that year, Daniel Pulteney and Martin Bladen, Lords of Trade, were appointed Commissioners in response to the appointment by Lewis of the Mareschal Comte d'Estrees and the Abbé Dubois, Minister and Secretary of State. Pulteney was a shrewd politician, and Bladen had been an officer in the army.

Appointment of a Commission.

The Lords of Trade having made the suggestion, the Company now wished their Governor, Sir Bibye Lake, to go over to Paris the "more earnestly to solicit and prosecute the claims of the Honourable Adventurers."[1]

Lake accordingly joined Bladen and Pulteney, and was permitted to take a part, though a silent one, in the conference.

It was intended that this Commission, meeting in Paris, should have power to settle generally the boundaries between the English and French possessions in America. But this was soon seen to be impracticable. The settlement of these matters was too vast and complicated for the Commission to deal with; and the Lords of Trade instructed Bladen, on his setting out, to deal only with the Hudson's Bay territories. It is significant that private instructions

[1] "It is by this Committee desired most humbly of the Governor to accept and undertake this journey and to manage the Company's affairs there, as he shall judge most conducive to their interest and advantage. Which, being signified to the Governor, he did, to the great satisfaction of the Committee, readily undertake and accept the same. It was ordered that the Governor have liberty to take with him such person or persons to France as he shall think fit."

of a similar nature were at the same time conveyed to the French Commissioners by their Government.

The Commissioners finally met. Perhaps it were a pity if Bladen's own account of what followed were allowed to perish :—

"On Saturday last, my Lord Stair and I met Marechal d'Estrees and Abbé Dubois. Our time was spent in preparatory discourses concerning the intent of the 10th article of the Treaty of Utrecht, relating to the boundaries of Hudson's Bay ; and at our next meeting, which will be to-morrow at my Lord Stair's House, we design to give in the claim of the Hudson's Bay Company, in writing, with some few additions pretty material for their service, in case the Abbé Dubois his health will allow him to be there, which I fear it will not, for he is confined at present to his bed.

"But I confess, I cannot help thinking it will be to a very little purpose to puzzle ourselves about setting boundaries, by treaty, in the North of America, if the French have so concise a way of fixing theirs in the south, without asking our concurrence ; it is to be hoped they will have the modesty to recede from this new acquisition, but in the meantime I cannot help saying this gives me no very good relish either of their friendship or discretion.

Martin Bladen's description of the Commission.

"I cannot leave this subject without observing how much it imports us to be upon our guard in our American Colonies. It were to be wished that the several Governments of his Majesty's plantations would pay the respect they owe to their instructions, and if those of Barbados for some time past had observed theirs, relating to Santa Lucia, the settlement of a hundred French families there could never have been put upon us at this day as a proof of their right to that island."

There is, further, much talk of a "multiplicity of books and papers necessary to be read," and of "arduous labours" in going over maps, charts, and memoirs, which, however numerous, "are not to be depended on."[1]

While this initial work was going on, one of the Adventurers was entreating his fellows at a Company meeting in London, to take note of a scheme which the French had been insidiously attempting for the previous four years to utterly destroy not only the Company's trade, but all the English colonies as well. He proceeded to read a private letter from a relation in the colony of Pennsylvania in which it was shown that the Mississippi Company required close watching.

"Its leaders are egged on by the Jesuits, and will stop at no bloody measures to draw down trade from the Indians. Their projects must inevitably succeed if we are not watchful."

This was put forward as one potent reason why the French were complaisant about yielding us the Bay itself. It was but the shell they would surrender, whilst preserving to themselves the kernel.

[1] MR. BLADEN TO MR. DELEFAYE.

PARIS, *November* 11, 1719, N.S.

On Wednesday last, my Lord Stair and I delivered to the Marechal d'Estrees the demand of the Hudson's Bay Company, with respect to their limits, and by comparing the enclosed, which is a copy of that demand, with the instruction upon his head, you will perceive the same has been fully complied with.

So soon as I shall have the French Commissary's answer to our demand, I shall likewise take care to transmit you a copy of it, to be laid before their Excellencys the Lord Justices.

This letter from the Pennsylvanian had its effect upon the easily alarmed Adventurers, for they lost no time in communicating their apprehensions to the Lords of Trade.

The matter was sent forward to Bladen and Pulteney. "It were heartily to be wished," the Company wrote, "that in imitation of our industrious neighbours the French, some means can be determined upon to extend the trade in furs southwards."

In response, Bladen imparted a brilliant idea. He suggested that St. Augustine might be "reduced at a small cost," and advantage taken thereby of the war then in progress with Spain. Had such a suggestion been acted upon the United States would have been saved the trouble, a century later, of paying Spain for the cession of Florida.

Matters went on in Paris as badly as could be. The English commissioners lost all patience. Nothing was in the air but the notorious John Law and his Mississippi scheme. The three Englishmen, Bladen, Pulteney, and Lake, were dined and feted, and they had no reason to complain of the hospitality of the Court: but they became at length disgusted with the whole business.[1] The "smug ancient gentlemen," as

[1] MR. PULTENEY TO MR. SECRETARY CRAGGS.

PARIS, *May the 4th*, N.S., 1720.

My Lord Stair has spoke to the Regent, who said immediately that the conferences shall be renewed whenever we please; his Excellency then desired His Royal Highness would appoint a day, which he

Bolingbroke had irreverently dubbed the Honourable Adventurers, were not yet to be satisfied in regard to the delimitation of boundaries. But perhaps even they had less interest at this moment in Hudson's Bay than in the new interests which had dramatically arisen much nearer home.

Governor Lake was suddenly sent for from London, and Bladen and Pulteney were not long in following him thither.

promised to do. This is what the Regent has promised my Lord Stair once every week, for four or five months past, without any effect, and his Excellency does not expect any more from the promise now, though possibly a conference may be appointed for form sake. I have been here near six months, and have seen only one conference, which was appointed by my Lord Stanhope's desire. I think there had been two conferences before I came; at the first of them the commissions were read, and at the second my Lord Stair and Mr. Bladen gave in a memorial about the limits of the Hudson's Bay Company, to which no answer has been made. I must own that I never could expect much success from this commission, since the French interests and ours are so directly opposite, and our respective pretensions interfere so much with each on the several points we were to treat about; but that the French have not been willing to entertain us now and then with a conference, and try how far we might be disposed to comply with a conference, and try how far we might be disposed with any of the views they had in desiring the commission, cannot, I should think, be accounted for but by supposing they knew we came prepared to reject all their demands, and to make very considerable ones for ourselves. . . . I shall expect your further direction as to my stay or return; I cannot help owning I heartily wish for the latter, but I shall always submit to what his Majesty likes best, and shall only desire in this case that I may have a supply from the treasury, since I have not had the good fortune to be concerned in either of the Misiseppis.

CHAPTER XVIII

1719–1727

THE SOUTH SEA BUBBLE — NATION CATCHES THE FEVER OF SPECULATION — STRONG TEMPTATION FOR THE COMPANY — PRICKING OF THE BUBBLE — NARROW ESCAPE OF THE ADVENTURERS — KNIGHT AND HIS EXPEDITION — ANXIETY AS TO THEIR FATE — CERTAINTY OF THEIR LOSS — BURNETT'S SCHEME TO CRIPPLE THE FRENCH — IT FORCES THEM WESTWARD INTO RUPERT'S LAND.

THE cause of the Governor's recall lay in the existence of a crisis which arose through the venality of some of the directors of the Hudson's Bay Company, victims of the South Sea fever.

South Sea Company.

The South Sea Company, whose extraordinary success gave rise to a thousand joint-stock enterprises equally unsound and fatuous, owed its origin in 1711 to Harley, Earl of Oxford, who in return for their acceptance of a government debt of £10,000,000, granted to a number of merchants a monopoly of the trade to the South Seas.

At that time the most extravagant ideas prevailed concerning the riches of South America. "If," it was said, "the Hudson's Bay Company can make vast moneys out of the frozen North, what can be done

with lands flowing with milk and honey?" The South Sea Adventurers carefully fostered all the current notions, spreading likewise the belief that Spain was ready to admit them to a share of its South American commerce.

In 1717 this company advanced to the English Government five more millions sterling, at an interest of six per cent. Their shares rose daily, and even the outbreak of war with Spain, which destroyed all hope in the minds of sensible persons of any share in the Spanish traffic, did not lessen the company's popularity. In Paris, John Law's Mississippi Bubble burst, ruining thousands, but, far from being alarmed at this catastrophe, it was universally believed that Law's scheme was sound, and had been wrecked through unwise methods. In May 1720, the South Sea Company proposed to take upon themselves the entire national debt of upwards of £30,000,000 upon a guarantee of five per cent. per annum for seven and one-half years, at the end of which period the debt might be redeemed if the Government chose, or the interest reduced to four per cent. The nation was dazzled; Parliament accepted the offer; and the Company's stock rose steadily to 330 on April 7, falling to 290 on the following day.

This day in April witnessed a change in method on the part of the South Sea directors. Until then the scheme had been honestly promoted; but the prospect of enormous wealth was too near to be permitted

to escape. It became thenceforward, until the crash, the prime object of the directors, at no matter what cost or scruple, to maintain the fictitious value of the shares. By May 28, £100 shares were quoted at 550; three days later they had reached 890. The whole nation caught the fever; the steadiest merchants turned gamblers. Hardly a day passed without a new swindling concern being started as a joint-stock company.

A fever of speculation.

Meanwhile several of the Hudson's Bay Merchants-Adventurers looked on with envious eyes. The desire was great to embark in so tempting a scheme, and the opportunity to cast inflated shares on the market almost too great to withstand.

But for many weeks the temptation was resisted. At last, at a meeting early in August, the chief director came before a general court of the Adventurers with a scheme by which each partner could either retire with a moderate fortune or remain an active participant, and reap the benefit of an infusion of public capital.

The scheme was, to modern notions, simplicity itself; but that it was not so regarded by some of the Adventurers themselves may be gathered from the following passage from a letter of Mrs. Mary Butterfield, one of the owners of the Company's stock.

"I cannot tell you how it is to be done, for that passes my wit; but in short, the value of our interests is to be trebled without our paying a farthing; and

then to be trebled again if the business is to the publick taste, and we are told it cannot fail to be."

It was late in August before the scheme was detailed. It was explained that the Company's assets in quick and dead stock and lands were £94,500. With this as a basis, it was proposed to enlarge the stock to the sum of £378,000, dividing this into 3780 shares of £100 each. Before this could be carried out, however, the existing stock, being but £31,500, or 315 shares, was to be made and reckoned 945 shares of £100 value each. By such means a result of £94,500 actual capital would appear. A majority of partners favoured the scheme, and the proposal was carried amidst the greatest enthusiasm. Its purpose was to unload the stock at an inflated figure, far even in excess of that actually named by its promoters. Had it succeeded and the flotation been carried out, it would have doubtless administered a death-blow to the Company as then organised, and would probably have involved the revocation of its charter in view of what was soon to occur. But the plan met with a sudden arrest by an event which, in beggaring multitudes, altered the whole disposition of the public with regard to joint-stock enterprises.

Plan to reorganise the Company.

A general impression gained ground that the South Sea Company's stock had attained high-water mark, and so many holders rushed to realise that the price fell, on June 3rd, to 640. The directors were not yet ready for their *coup*. Agents were despatched

by them to buy up and support the market, and the result was that by nightfall of that day the quoted price was £750. By means of similarly unscrupulous devices, the shares were sent up, early in August, to 1000. The long-awaited opportunity had arrived. Many of the directors sold out; a general anxiety prevailed and the shares began to decline. In view of this change in affairs, the Hudson's Bay Company's meeting for September 3rd was deferred. On the 12th, South Sea shares were selling at 400, and the decline continued. The country was thrown into the greatest excitement, and by December Parliament met to consider the calamity.

With what happened subsequently, to the authors and participators in this celebrated joint-stock swindle, it is not my present purpose to deal; it is sufficient to say that the Hudson's Bay Company was saved most opportunely from sharing the fate of its neighbour and rival. A meeting was held on the 23rd of December, at which it was resolved that the "said subscription be vacated; and that the Company's seal be taken off from the said instrument."

Nevertheless there remained one permanent result. For the nominal capital of the Hudson's Bay Company had been trebled, and it was now further resolved that each subscriber should be credited with £30 of stock "for each £10 by him paid in." The total capital thus stood at the beginning of 1721 at over £100,000.

The Company had experienced a narrow escape. To what extent its shares would have been inflated may only be conjectured; but it is certain it could not have avoided being swept into the vortex and sharing the same fate which overtook so many of its commercial contemporaries. Its enemies were on the watch, and they would have proved relentless. A revocation of its charter would have accomplished its final downfall.

Already the Company was being assailed because it had not complied with one of the provisions named in that instrument: that of making search for a north-west passage. It was not, however, to quiet these reproaches, so persistently levelled at it, that a year before the bursting of the South Sea Bubble an expedition was actually set on foot to accomplish the long-deferred exploration.

Knight, the Company's aged Governor at York Factory, had long listened to the tales of the Indians concerning the copper mines to the north; and resolved, on his return to England, to bring the matter before the Company. This he did, but it was by no means an easy matter to induce the Adventurers to consent to the expense of further exploration. Nevertheless Knight's insistence prevailed, more especially as, besides the profitable results to be obtained through such a voyage, he was careful to point out that the Company were constrained under their charter to undertake such an expedition.

In 1719 the Company, therefore, fitted out two ships for the purpose of discovery north of Churchill. One of these, called the *Albany*, a frigate, was commanded by George Barlow, whom we have already seen as Deputy-Governor at Albany in 1704, when the French failed to capture that post. The other, named the *Discovery*, a sloop, under David Vaughan. But the command of the expedition itself was entrusted to Knight, who was a man of great experience in the Company's service, who had been for many years Governor of different Factories in the Bay, and who had made the first settlement at Churchill River.

Expedition to explore the north-west passage.

Notwithstanding the extensive knowledge Knight possessed of the Company's business, and its methods of trade with the Indians, there was nothing to lead any one to suppose him especially adapted for the present enterprise, having nothing to direct him but the slender and imperfect accounts which he, in common with many other of the Company's servants, had received from the Indians, who, as we have seen, were at that time little known and less understood.

But these disadvantages, added to his advanced years (Knight being then nearly eighty), by no means restrained his bold spirit. Indeed, so confident was he of success and of the material advantages which would accrue from his impending discoveries, that he caused to be made, and carried with him, several large iron-bound chests, wherein to bestow the gold dust and

other treasures which he "fondly flattered himself were to be found in those parts."

The first paragraph of the Company's instructions to Knight on this occasion was as follows:—

To Captain James Knight.

4th June 1719.

Sir,—From the experience we have had of your abilities in the management of our affairs, we have, upon your application to us, fitted out the *Albany* frigate, Captain George Barlow, and the *Discovery*, Captain David Vaughan, Commander, upon a discovery to the northward; and to that end have given you power and authority to act and do all things relating to the said voyage, navigation of the said ship and sloop only excepted; and have given orders and instructions to our said Commanders for that purpose. You are, with the first opportunity of wind and weather, to depart from Gravesend on your intended voyage, and by God's permission to find out the Straits of Anian,[1] and to discover gold and other valuable commodities to the north.

Knight departed from Gravesend on board the *Albany*, and proceeded on his voyage. The ships not returning to England that year no uneasiness was felt, as it was judged they had wintered in the Bay. Both were known to have on board a plentiful stock of provisions, a house in frame, together with the requisite tools and implements, and a large assortment of trading goods. Little anxiety was therefore entertained concerning their safety for fifteen months. But when New Year's Day, 1721, arrived, and neither ship nor sloop had been heard from, the Company naturally became alarmed for their welfare.

[1] For an account of these fabled straits, see chapter xxviii.

By the ship sailing to Churchill in June they sent orders for a sloop then in the Bay, called the *Whalebone*, John Scroggs, master, to go in search of the missing explorers. But the *Whalebone* was cruising about in the north of the Bay at the time, on the Esquimaux trade, and returned to Churchill at so advanced a season of the year as to defer the execution of the Company's wishes until the following summer.

The north-west shore was little known in those days, so it is not singular that Captain Scroggs, on board the little *Whalebone*, finding himself encompassed by dangerous shoals and rocks, should return to Prince of Wales' Fort little the wiser regarding the fate of the two ships. He saw amongst the Esquimaux, it is true, European clothing and articles, as at a later day Rae and McClintock found souvenirs of the Franklin tragedy; but these might have been come by in trade, or as the result of chance events. None could yet affirm that a shipwreck or other total calamity had overtaken Knight and his companions.

Anxiety as to the fate of the expedition.

Many years elapsed without anything to shed light on the fate of this expedition. At first, the strong belief which had so long prevailed in Europe of a north-west passage by way of this Bay, caused many to conjecture that the explorers had found that passage and had gone through it into the South Sea. But before the voyages of Middleton, Ellis, Bean, Christopher,

and Jobington had weakened this belief, all Europe knew that Knight, Barlow, and the crews of the two ships had perished. Proofs of their fate were reserved for the year 1767, as will appear in a later chapter of this work.

An important circumstance now transpired which was not without effect upon the Company's trade; and which, for a time, gave the Adventurers great uneasiness.

In 1727 Burnett had been appointed to the Governorship of New York. Finding that the French in Canada were in possession of all the Indian fur-trade of the north and west, which was not in the Hudson's Bay Company's hands, and that the New Englanders were employed trafficking with the Iroquois, he determined to take a bold step with a view to crippling the French.

It had long been understood that the chief support of New France was in the fur commerce; and upon inquiry it was found that the traders of Quebec and Montreal were chiefly supplied with European merchandise for barter from the New York merchants, from whom they procured it upon much easier terms than it could possibly be got from France. With this knowledge, the Governor resolved to foster the fur-trade of his colony by inducing direct transactions with the Indians. He procured an Act in the Assembly of the colony, prohibiting the trade in merchandise from New York.

Attempt of New York to secure the fur-trade.

The colonial merchants were not unnaturally up in arms against such a measure; but Burnett, bent upon carrying his point, had their appeal to King George set aside and the Act confirmed by that monarch.

By reason of this measure, trade at once sprang up with the Western Indians, since the French had no goods to offer them in any way to their liking at a reasonable price. Intercourse and familiarity ensued moreover in consequence; a fortified trading post was built at Oswego, which not only drew away trade from the French, at Michilimackinac and St. Marie, but from Albany and Moose as well.

It has been observed that the ancient boundaries of Canada or New France were circumscribed by the Treaty of Utrecht, and that it is difficult to determine precisely the new boundaries assigned to it. The general interpretation adopted by the British geographers, as the country gradually became better known from that time up to the final cession of Canada, was that the boundary ran along the high lands separating the waters that discharged into the St. Lawrence from those that discharge into Hudson's Bay to the sources of the Nepigon River, and thence along the northerly division of the same range of high lands dividing the waters flowing direct to Hudson's Bay, from those flowing into Lake Winnipeg, and crossing the Nelson, or (as it was then known) the Bourbon River, about midway between the said Lake and Bay, thence passing to the west and north by the sources of Churchill

River; no westerly boundary being anywhere assigned to Canada. Thus, Burnett's measure could have but one result: to make the French traders and the Government of New France perceive that their only hope to avert famine and bankruptcy lay in penetrating farther and farther into the west, in an effort to reach remote tribes, ignorant of true values and unspoilt by a fierce and ungenerous rivalry.

Boundaries between French and English territory.

It is fitting to reserve the next two chapters for a consideration of who and what were the tribes at this time inhabiting the territories granted by its charter to the Great Company; together with their numbers, their modes of life, and relations with the factories.

CHAPTER XIX

1687–1712

HUDSON'S BAY TRIBES PEACEFUL — EFFECT OF THE TRADERS' PRESENCE — DEPLETION OF POPULATION — THE CREES AND ASSINIBOINES—THEIR HABITS AND CUSTOMS—THEIR NUMBERS —NO SUBORDINATION AMONGST THEM—SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS —EFFECT OF INTEMPERANCE UPON THE INDIAN.

LET us imagine for a moment that the Hudson's Bay Company had held traffic with the fierce and implacable Iroquois, the Mohawks or the courageous and bloodthirsty tribes of the Mississippi, instead of with the Crees and Assiniboines. How different would have been its early history! What frail protection would have been afforded by the forts and wooden palisades, often not stronger than that last fort of the Jesuits in the Huron country, the inmates of which were slaughtered so ruthlessly, or that other at Niagara, where the Chevalier de Troyes and ninety of his companions perished.

But the Red men of the Company's territories, compared to these, were pacific. Occasionally want or deep injustice drove them to acts of barbarism, as we have seen in the case of the massacre at York Factory under Jérémie's *régime;* but on the whole they had no

marked enmity to the European, and long displayed a remarkable and extremely welcome docility.

"The Assinibouels," remarked Jérémie, "are humane and affable; and so are also all those Indians with whom we have commerce in the Bay, never trading with the French but as their fathers and patrons. Although savages, they are foes to lying, which is extraordinary in nations which live without subordination or discipline. One cannot impute to them any vice, unless they are a little too slanderous. They never blaspheme and have not even a term in their language which defines an oath."

Character of the Assiniboines.

If we are to believe the early traders and explorers, the Red man of Rupert's Land spoke a tongue by no means difficult for an Englishman to master. Yet if the fur pioneers really took the trouble to master it, as they alleged they had done, their knowledge, it is certain, brought little order into the chaos of tribal nomenclature.

The custom of fantastic names for the Indians was long continued. More than one instance occurs of the impropriety with which the French-Canadians named the Indians. They called one tribe Gros Ventres, or Big Bellies, and that without any known reason; they being as comely and well made as any other tribe. "They are very far," says one trader, "from being remarkable for their corpulency." This tribe also came to be known as the Fall Indians.

Jérémie observed that the Ouinebigonholinis inhabited the sea-coast. The Poaourinagou country was inhabited by the Miskogonhirines or Savannas, who made war with the Hakouchirmions. Twelve leagues above York Factory was situated the River Oujuragatchousibi, while far beyond dwelt the Nakonkirhirinons.

Indian country.

One might readily suspect a commandant of one fort in the Indian country of drawing upon his imagination when he speaks of such nations as the Unighkillyiakow, Ishisageck Roanu, the Twightwis Roanu, the Oskiakikis, Oyachtownuck Roanu, Kighetawkigh Roanu, and the Kirhawguagh Roanu.

One of the Company's factors reported, in 1736, that a tribe lived beyond the range of mountains, who had never known the use of firearms, for which reason they were made slaves of by the Assiniboines and Crees. He declared he had beheld several of this tribe "who all wanted a joynt of their little finger, which was cut off soon after birth."

"The Migichihilinons, that is the Eagle Ey'd Indians," reported Middleton, one of the Company's captains, "are at two hundred Leagues Distance; the Assinibouels inhabit the West and North; they are reputed to be the same Nation because of the great affinity of their language. The name signifies Men of the Rock. They use the Calumet and live at two hundred and fifty Leagues Distance. They paint their Bodies, are grave, and have much Phlegm, like *Flemings*." He also

enumerates the Michinipic Poets, or Men of Stone, of the Great Lake; but it is easy to believe that these two are of the same tribe.

In the seventeenth century, the districts about the Great Lakes were rather thickly populated. Certain regions which at the opening of the eighteenth century were but thinly sprinkled by inhabitants, once had boasted numerous tribes. For when the first missionaries visited the south of Lake Superior in 1668, they found the country full of inhabitants. They relate that about this time a band of Nepisingues, converts to the Jesuitical teaching, emigrated to the Nepigon country. By 1785 few of their descendants were said to exist, and not a trace amongst them of the religion espoused by their ancestors.

As to the Lake of the Woods district, before the smallpox, in 1781, ravaged these parts and completed what the Nodwayes by their warfare had gone far to accomplish, this country was very densely inhabited.

The Crees.

The Crees, or Christineaux, were the earliest as well as the most numerous tribe which had dealings with the Company. They sprang from the same stock as the Ojibways, Chippewas or Saulteurs, who with the Assiniboines inhabited the vast interior of the country to the west of the Bay. Their language, according to one of the early traders, was less copious and expressive than their mother tongue. They were deficient in many direct terms for things, often expressing themselves in approximate

phrases, whereas the Ojibways would have an exactly corresponding term ready at command. The Crees appear not to have possessed the custom of totems, so that it was often difficult for members of the tribe to trace their ancestry back for more than two or three generations.

In their ideas of creation the Crees and the Saulteurs resembled, and the early traders and bushrangers learnt gradually that both nations owned a mythology of no mean proportions. Nain au Bouchaw, the God of the Saulteurs, was known as "Wee sue-ha-jouch," amongst the Crees; but the tales they told concerning him were by no means clear and distinct, nor in such general currency. The Crees were divided into two groups: those inhabiting the plains, and the denizens of the woods; the latter being far the most enterprising and useful to the trade of the Company. The tents of the Crees, like those of the other tribes in Rupert's Land, were of dressed leather, erected by means of poles, seventeen of which latter were required for the purpose, two being tied together about three feet from the top. The whole formed nearly a circle which was then covered with buffalo, moose, or red deer skins, well sewn together, nicely cut to fit the conical figure of the poles. An opening was then arranged above to let out the smoke, and admit the light. Such tents were of goodly size, commonly measuring twenty feet in diameter. A fire was kindled in the centre, around which a range of stones was placed to keep the

Their mode of living.

fire compact. The Crees were fond of self-adornment and were much addicted to the use of false hair. Their morals at first greatly shocked the servants of the Company, and in the early reports sent home from York Factory much stress was laid upon the need for enlightenment in this regard amongst the savages. Polygamy was common, but not universal. The first wife was considered as mistress of the tent, ruling all the others, often with a rod of iron, and obliging them to perform all the drudgery.

The names of the children were always given to them by their parents, or some near relative. Those of the boys were various, and generally derived from some place, season, or animal. The names of the female children, amongst the northern Indians, were chiefly taken from some part or property of a marten, such as the White Marten, the Black Marten, the Summer Marten, the Marten's Head, the Marten's Foot, the Marten's Heart, the Marten's Tail, &c.[1]

The exact number of Crees at the time of the Company's advent, it is difficult to compute. Even at that time they were dispersed over a vast extent of country, mixing with the Assiniboines and other nations with whom they were on terms of peace. In 1709 appeared an estimate that there were no fewer than a million members of the Cree Nation. From what source was derived this conclusion is not given.

[1] "Matonabbee," says Governor Hearne, "had eight wives, and they were all called Martens."

It may be laid down as a general rule that all contemporary estimates as to the population of the Indian tribes which were necessarily founded upon hearsay prior to actual penetration into their country are fanciful and totally unreliable. Perhaps the most significant fact which the historian Parkman brought home to the masses of his readers, was the astounding discrepancy between current conception of the numbers of the various tribes, particularly the Iroquois, and that attested and corroborated by the acute research of scholars, and by the testimony of contemporaries. In 1749 the Company thought the number of the Crees to be about 100,000 men, women, and children. A half century later they had diminished to about 14,000, although, in 1810, Henry can find only about 300 tents full of Crees capable of furnishing less than 1000 men. In this calculation, however, he did not include the Crees who lived north of Beaver River. The Crees were, for the most part, quiet and inoffensive, and their personal appearance not entirely prepossessing. Compared with the wilder and more valiant tribes to the south and east, their carriage and deportment was inferior; still they were gifted with activity, and with prominent, wiry figures and intelligent countenances.

The Assiniboines.

The next numerous tribe was the Assiniboine, or Stone Indians, who it is believed originated with the Sioux or Nodwayes. But owing to some misunderstanding between the bands they separated, and some half century before the first fort

was built by the Company they were in possession of a vast extent of prairie country near the Red River, and thence running westward. The region they inhabited may be said to commence at the Hare Hills, near Red River, and running along the Assiniboine to the junction of the north and south branches of the Saskatchewan. They were generally of a moderate stature, slender and active. In complexion they were of a lighter copper colour than the Crees, with more regular features. Moreover they were readily distinguished from the latter by a different head-dress.

Other tribes trading with the Company were the Sioux, Blackfeet, Blood, Slave, and Crow Indians. There were also the Esquimaux, with whom a traffic in the north was carried on chiefly for whalebone, ivory, and oil.

"I have often," wrote Captain Coats, "thought this people of the lineage of the Chinese, in the many features I see in them, their bloated flatt faces, little eyes, black hair, little hands and feet, and their listlessness in travelling. The women are very fair, when free from grease, very submissive to their men, very tender to their children, and indefatigable in the gee-gaws to please their men and children."

The Red Indians of Rupert's Land owned no manner of government or subordination. The father or head of the family obeyed no superior nor any command, and he himself only gave his advice or opinions. Consequently it was rarely that any great chief ever

existed, and then only in time of war. It is true that when several families went to war, or to the factories to trade, they chose a leader, but to such a one obedience was only voluntary; every one was at liberty to leave when he pleased, and the notion of a commander was soon obliterated.

Merit alone gave title to distinction; such merit as an experienced hunter could boast, or one who possessed knowledge of communication between lakes and rivers, who could make long harangues, was a conjurer, or had a large family. Such a man was sure to be followed by several Indians when they happened to be out in large parties. They likewise followed him down to trade at the settlements, although upon such occasions he was forced to secure their attendance by promises and rewards, as the regard paid to his ability was of too weak a nature to command subjection. In war a mutual resentment forced their union for perpetrating vengeance.

The Hudson's Bay Indian's method of dividing time was by numbering the nights elapsed or to come. Thus, if he were asked how long he had been on his journey, he would answer, "so many nights." From the nocturnal division he proceeded to lunar or monthly reckoning, twelve to a year, all of these moons being symbolical of some remarkable event or appearance.

Their method of computing numbers was abstruse, they reckoning chiefly by decades: two-tens, three-tens,

ten-tens. A few units over or under were added or subtracted, thirty-two being three-tens and two over. If they reckoned any large number a skin or stick was laid down for every ten, and afterwards tied in a bundle for the aggregate.

The servants of the Company were not a little astonished at the wonderful intuition of the Indian, which enabled him to forego the advantage to be derived from a compass, and yet rarely to miss his way. The trees, he knew, were all bent to the south, and the branches on that side were larger and stronger than on the north, as was also the moss. When he wished to apprise his women of the spot where the game was killed, he broke off branches here and there, laying them in the path with their ends pointed in the requisite direction.

Intelligence of the Indians.

In winter, when the braves went abroad they rubbed themselves all over with bear's grease or beaver oil, treating in this fashion, too, the furs they wore.

"They use," says one trader, "no milk from the time they are weaned, and they all hate to taste Cheese, having taken up an opinion that it was made of Dead Men's Fat." They were fond of prunes and raisins, and would give a beaver skin for twelve of them to carry to their children, and also for a Jew's-harp or a tin trumpet. They were great admirers of pictures or prints, giving a beaver for bad prints, and "all toys were jewels to them."

A trader at a little later period writes: "Having

been fortunate enough to administer medical relief to one of these Indians during their stay, I came to be considered as a physician, and found that was a character held in high veneration," and goes on to add that their solicitude and credulity as to drugs and nostrums had exposed them to gross deceptions on the part of the agents of the Hudson's Bay Company. One of the chiefs informed him that he had been at the Bay the year before and there purchased a quantity of medicines which he would allow his visitor to inspect. Accordingly, he fetched a bag containing numerous small papers, in which he found lumps of white sugar, grains of coffee, pepper, allspice, cloves, tea, nutmegs, ginger, and other things of the kind, sold as specifics against evil spirits and against the dangers of battle. These compounds were said to give power over enemies, particularly the white bear, of which the Indians in those latitudes were much afraid; others were infallible against barrenness in women, against difficult labour, and against a variety of other afflictions.

Superstition of the Indians.

It is related that some Indians, who were employed in the vicinity of York Factory in a goose hunt, were so influenced by superstition that they firmly believed the devil, with hideous howlings, frequented their tent every night. They came in a most dejected state to the factory and related a lamentable tale to the Governor, setting forth with much pathos the distress they were being subjected to by his Satanic Majesty. So overcome were they that

they kept large fires burning all night, sleeping only in the day-time. One of the Red men declared that he had discharged his gun at the monster, but unluckily missed. The devil was described as of human shape, with a capacity for enormous strides. The Governor treated the victims to a little brandy, and as if by magic their courage rose. Investigation that same night disclosed that Satan was neither more nor less than a huge night-owl.

The same trader also declares he found a number of small prints, such as in England were commonly sold to children, but which amongst the Indians were each transformed into a talisman for the cure of some evil or for procuring some delight. He even gives the mottoes on some of these, and their specific uses: No. 1—"A sailor kissing his mistress on his return from sea." This worn about the person of a gallant attracted, though concealed, the affections of the sex! No. 2—"A soldier in arms." Such a talisman poured a sentiment of valour into its possessor and gave him the strength of a giant!

It was alleged that by means of such commodities many customers were secured to the Company, nor is there reason to doubt it. "Even those Indians who shortened their voyage by dealing with us, sent forward one canoe laden with beaver skins to purchase articles of this kind at Cumberland House." Henry says that he was wise enough not to dispute their value.

As time went on the Indians began to relinquish

many of the habits and customs, and even the appearance they presented, before the advent of the white traders. Being in constant communication with the factories, they became semi-civilised, and took on many of the outer characteristics of the European. They brought in year after year the spoils of the chase in strict confidence, and there exchanged them for the necessaries of life, which they no longer provided for themselves. To all intents and purposes the tribes were in the pay of the Company, or lived upon their bounty. It was, therefore, to be expected that all originality would be lost amongst them.

The principal things necessary for the support and satisfaction of the Indian and his family in the middle of the eighteenth century were: a gun, hatchet, ice chisel, tobacco, knives, files, flints, powder and shot, a powder horn, a bayonet, a kettle, cloth, beads, &c.

It was early found that alcohol was a very dangerous element to introduce amongst the savages. Talon had presented the unhappy colony of New France with a statute removing all the penalties and ordinances of which justice and the authorities had made use to repress the disorders caused by the too great quantity of liquor given to the Indians.

The inclination of the Indians for intoxication, it was pointed out to Colbert by an ecclesiastic who sought to alter the condition of affairs, is much stronger than that of the people of Europe. They have, urged he, greater weakness in resisting it. "If in a bourgade there be

liquor freely accessible to the Indians, they usually all become intoxicated — old, young, great and small, women and children, so that there is hardly one left sober. If there were liquor sufficient to last two days, drunkenness invariably continued two days. If enough for a week, it would last a week; if for a month, it would last a month. This," said the good priest, "is what we do not see in Europe—a whole city get drunk, nor see it continue in that state for weeks and months."

Liking of the Indians for liquor

It may readily be perceived that those who wished to strike a bargain favourable to themselves with the Indians, had only to resort to liquor, and by that means, without regard to their own salvation or that of the savages, could generally procure what they desired at a small expenditure.

An Indian, it was said early in the next century, would barter away all his furs, nay, even leave himself without a rag to cover his nakedness, in exchange for that "vile, unwholesome stuff called English brandy."

The Company in England having decided not to employ liquor in its traffic with the Indians, the temptation was strong upon Colbert and the French to resort to it. At one of its meetings, in 1685, the Company listened to a paper describing the methods in vogue by the French traders at the important post of Tadousac. At this fort or factory, for more than twenty years previously, it was the custom to allow an Indian a quart of wine; this fluid, although it boasted such a title, hardly merited it. It was composed of

one part of brandy to five parts of water; a proportion which fluctuated, it is true, but chiefly in respect of more water. To this more or less fiery liquid was given at a little later date the name "high wine"; and high wine figured largely in the dealings of both French and English with the Indians for more than two centuries. If an Indian desired more than the regulation quart, he was put off until another time. The necessary moderation was thus secured, and the trade suffered no injury. Colbert expressed himself as afraid that if the Quebec Company did not employ liquor the Indians would carry their beavers to the Dutch. He need not, however, have troubled himself with this apprehension, as it was the Iroquois alone who could go there, and the French of Quebec did small trade with this hostile nation. It was asserted that the French would not lose five hundred skins a year by preserving the moderation necessary for Christianity, and the good morality of the colony.

Excess of liquor frequently made Europeans merry and gay; on the Indian, however, it had a contrary effect. Under its influence he recalled his departed friends and relations, lamenting their death with abundance of tears. Should he be near their graves he would often resort thither and weep copiously. Others would join the chorus in a song, even though quite unable to hold up their heads. It was not uncommon for them to roll about their tents in a fit of frenzy, frequently falling into the blazing fire. Quarrelling

then was common; an ancient disagreement, long forgotten, being revived. The chiefs had often the prudence, when matters were going this way, to order the women to remove all offensive weapons out of the tent. But one very effective weapon, the teeth, still remained; nor was it unusual to see several braves the next morning lacking a nose, an ear, or a finger. In affrays such as these, no respect whatever was paid to the ties of blood, brothers and sisters often fighting with great spirit and animosity. At the conclusion of one convivial encounter early in the eighteenth century, an Indian entered York Factory one morning and desired to be admitted to the surgeon. He was conducted to the surgeon's room; he saluted its inmate in broken English, with "Look here, man; here my nose," at the same time holding out his palm, which contained that desirable facial adjunct, which he, having a mighty opinion of the faculty, desired the surgeon to restore. The man's nephew had, it seems, bit it off; he declared he felt no pain, nor was he sensible of his loss till awaking the next morning he found the nose lying by his side.

Effect of intoxication on the Indians.

CHAPTER XX

1685–1742

ERRANT TRIBES OF THE BAY—THE GOOSE HUNT—ASSEMBLAGE AT LAKE WINNIPEG—DIFFICULTIES OF THE VOYAGE—ARRIVAL AT THE FORT—CEREMONY FOLLOWED BY DEBAUCH—GIFTS TO THE CHIEF—HE MAKES A SPEECH TO THE GOVERNOR—CEREMONY OF THE PIPE—TRADING BEGUN.

THE tribes to the west of the Bay led an erratic life. They were, at this early period, entirely without horses, and their custom it was never to remain above a fortnight in one spot, unless plenty of game were discovered.

When they had encamped, and their lodges were built, they dispersed to hunt, meeting in the evening when they had procured enough to maintain them during the day. It was not their habit to travel more than three or four miles from their lodges, but when scarcity of game was encountered they would remove a league or two farther off. In this fashion they traversed the whole forest region, hardly missing a single day, fair or foul, winter or summer; but being constantly employed in some kind of chase.

The Indians were ruthless slaughterers of animals at the earliest period at which they were known to the

servants of the Company. Whether they chanced to be under the pinch of necessity or enjoying themselves in all the happiness of health and plenty, it was their policy to slay all they could. They boasted a maxim that the "more they killed the more they had to kill." Such an opinion, although opposed to reason and common sense, was clung to by them with great pertinacity. The results of this indiscriminate slaughter were obvious; and to such a pitch of destitution were the tribes often brought that cannibalism was not infrequent amongst them.

The Indians as hunters.

The species of game, such as marten, squirrel, and ermine, got by traps and snares, was generally the prey of the women and children. When the men had slain their elks, deer, buffalo, or foxes, they left each where it fell, leaving the squaws to fetch it to the lodges the next day, but taking care to cut off the titbits or tender morsels for their own immediate pleasure.

A great part of the factory provisions consisted of geese killed by the Indians. For this purpose the factors supplied powder and shot, allowing the value of a beaver skin for every ten geese killed. Accordingly, after the Indian had got his supply, he set off from his tent early in the morning into the marshes, where he sat himself down with great patience, difficult of imitation by the Company's men, and there, sheltered by willows, waited for the geese. These were shot flying, and so dexterous were the braves at this sport that a good hunter would kill, in times of plenty, fifty or

sixty a day. Few Europeans were able to endure the cold, hunger, and adversity which often marked these excursions.

The nations coming from a distance to York Factory were wont to assemble in May at Lake Winnipeg to the number of several thousand men. The chief would deliver a harangue, representing their wants, and counselling the young men to exert themselves to the utmost to reach the fort with all their skins and to secure good terms from the Company. Each family then made a feast, in the course of which they fixed upon those of their number who were to undertake the journey. During the progress of the wassail which then reigned it was customary for speeches to be made, new alliances to be formed and old ones strengthened. The morrow was spent in building the birch-bark canoes, in which the northern tribes exhibited great proficiency; and being at last ready for the voyage, the leaders of the expedition were chosen, and a start was made.

Meeting at Lake Winnipeg.

It was never exactly ascertained how many actually participated in these trading expeditions; the number was regulated by the circumstance of the tribes being at peace or at war, and also whether disease raged amongst them. It may be taken, roughly speaking, that six hundred canoes containing one thousand persons, not counting women, came down annually to York Factory with furs to trade.

No regularity marked their voyage, each striving to

be foremost, because those in the vanguard had the best chance of procuring food. During the voyage each leader canvassed, with all manner of art and diligence, for braves to join his party. Some were influenced by presents, and others by promises; for the more canoes each petty leader had under his command the greater he appeared at the factory.

Throughout their journey the Indians were obliged to go ashore for several hours daily, which caused great delay in their progress. Their canoes were small, holding only two men and a pack of one hundred beaver skins, with not much room for provisions. Had their canoes been larger their voyages would undoubtedly have been less protracted, and each would have been able to transport a greater cargo. Often great numbers of skins were left behind.

Difficulties of the journey.

A good hunter of these nations could kill six hundred beavers in the course of a season; he could carry down to the factory rarely more than one hundred, using the remainder at home in various ways. Sometimes he hung them upon branches of trees by way of votive offering upon the death of a child or near relation; often they were utilised as bedding and bed coverings; occasionally the fur was burnt off, and the carcase roasted whole for food at banquets.

These annual journeys were beset by much hardship and suffering even at the best of times; and concerning this the testimony of at least one Governor is

significant. "While," said he, "it is the duty of every one of the Company's servants to encourage a spirit of industry among the natives, and to use every means in their power to induce them to procure furs and other commodities for trade . . . at the same time, it must be confessed that such conduct is by no means for the real benefit of the poor Indians; it being well known that those who have the least intercourse with the factories are by far the happiest. . . . It is true that there are few Indians but have once in their lives, at least, visited the fort, and the hardships and dangers which most of them experienced on those occasions have left such a lasting impression on their minds, that nothing can induce them to repeat their visits."

Arriving near the end of such annual journey to the forts, they all put ashore; the women going into the woods to gather pine-brush for the bottom of the tents, while the leaders smoked together and arranged the procession to the factory. This settled, they re-embarked, and soon after arrived before the post of the Company; if there happened to be but one captain, his situation was in the centre of all the canoes; if more than one, they placed themselves at the wings, their canoes being distinguished by a small flag hoisted on a stick and placed astern. When within two hundred yards of the palisade, they discharged their fowling-pieces by way of compliment to the Governor, who returned the salute by letting off two or three small cannon. The men of the tribe seldom concerned

themselves with taking out the bundles, but occasionally the younger ones condescended to assist the women.

By such means the factor being informed that the Indians had arrived, a trader was sent to introduce their leaders into the fort. Chairs were placed in the trading-room for the visitors, and pipes handed in. During the first part of the ceremony the leader puffed great clouds of smoke, but said little; but when the tobacco in the bowl became low, he grew more talkative. Fixing his eyes immovably on the ground, he informed the factors how many canoes he had brought, and what tribes he had seen; he inquired after the health of his hosts, and declared his pleasure at seeing them. When this speech was concluded the Governor bade the chief and his party welcome, informing him that he had good goods and plenty, that he loved the Indians, and they might count upon his kindness to them. The pipe was then removed, and the conversation became general.

Arrival at the Fort.

During this visit the chief was newly apparelled at the Company's expense, being furnished with a coarse cloth coat, red or blue, lined with baize, with white regimental cuffs; a waistcoat and breeches of baize. This suit was neatly ornamented with orris lace. He was likewise presented with a white or checked cotton shirt, stockings of yarn, one red and the other blue, and tied below the knee with worsted garters; his moccasins were sometimes put on over these, but he as

often walked away in his bare feet. His hat was of coarse felt, bedecked with three ostrich feathers of various colours. A worsted sash was fastened to the crown, a small silk handkerchief drawn about his neck; and thus attired, the chief strutted up and down in a state of boundless delight.

The second in command now claimed attention. He was given an unlined coat, and a shirt and a cap such as was worn by sailors of the period. The guests having been thus equipped, such highly esteemed luxuries as bread and prunes were forthcoming and set before the chief; of which confections he took care to fill his pockets before they were carried out. Following these came a two-gallon keg of brandy, pipes and tobacco for the chief and his followers.

It was now high time to think of returning to the camp, but this exit was not to be undertaken without further marks of the favour and esteem in which the chief was held by the Company. His conduct from the fort was a ceremony of state. In front were borne a halberd and ensign; next came a drummer beating a march, followed by several of the factory servants bearing bread, prunes, pipes, tobacco, brandy, &c. Next came the "King," "Captain," or chief, with stately tread and erect, smoking his pipe and conversing with the factors at his side. Afterwards followed the "Lieutenant," "Prince," relative or friend, who had accompanied the chief.

The tent was found ready for their reception; having

been strewn with clean pine-brush, and beaver coats placed for them to sit upon. The brandy was deposited on the ground, and the chief gave orders for its distribution. After this the factor left, and none too quickly was his departure taken, for all were soon plunged into a state of brutal intoxication. "It is fifty to one," writes one trader, "but some one is killed before morning. They give loose rein to every species of disorderly tumult—all crying, fighting, and dancing."

About 1735, a party of Indians came down to trade, and the first day of their arrival, as was their invariable custom, got vilely drunk. While thus inebriated, they fought, not noisily, but silently, in the darkness. When morning dawned, two corpses, in a fearful state of mutilation, were found stretched on the ground in pools of blood.

After such a debauch, which lasted about two or three days, the sobered braves had resort to the calumet of peace. The stem of this pipe was three or four feet long, decorated with pieces of lace, bears' claws, eagles' talons, and the feathers of the most beautiful birds. The pipe being affixed to the stem, the factor took it in both hands, and with great gravity rose from his chair and pointed the end of the stem to the east or sunrise, and then to the zenith, and to the west, and then perpendicularly to the nadir. After this he took three or four hearty whiffs and then presented it to the chief, and so on round the whole party, the women excepted. When the tobacco was

Ceremony of the pipe.

consumed the factor took the pipe again, and twirling it three times round his head laid it with great deliberation on the table. A great Ho! was thereupon emitted from the mouths of the assemblage.[1]

This ceremony being over, a further gratuity of bread and prunes was distributed, and the chief made a speech, which one trader has reported, after this style—

"You told me last year to bring many Indians to trade, which I promised to do. You see, I have not lied, here are many young men come with me; use them kindly, I say; let them trade good goods, I say. We lived hard last winter and were hungry; powder being short measure and bad, I say. Tell your servants to fill the measure, and not put their thumbs within the brim; take pity on us, take pity on us, I say.

"We paddle a long way to see you; we love the English. Let us trade good black tobacco, moist and hard twisted; let us see it before it is opened. Take pity on us, take pity on us, I say.

"The guns are bad, let us trade light guns, small in the hand and well shaped, and locks that will not freeze in the winter, and red gun-cases. Let the young

[1] All this ceremony has a significance of its own. Interpreted, it said: "Whilst the sun shall visit the different parts of the world and make day and night; peace, firm friendship, and brotherly love shall be established between the English and the Indians, and the same on the latter's part. By twirling the pipe over the head, it was further intended to imply that all persons of the two nations, whosoever they were, should be comprised in the friendship and brotherhood then concluded or renewed.

men have more than measure of tobacco, cheap kettles, thick and high.

"Give us good measure of cloth; let us see the old measure. The young men love you by coming so far to see you. Give them good goods; they like to dress and be fine; do you see?"

As soon as the chief had finished the above speech, he, with his followers, proceeded to examine the guns and tobacco; the former with a most minute attention. This over, they traded with furs promiscuously, the leader being so far indulged as to be admitted into the trading-room, there to remain the whole time if he so desired.

The beaver thus received by the chief trader and stored at the factory pending its shipment to England in the Company's ships, was classified into eight varieties. The first was the fat winter beaver, slain in winter, which was valued at five shillings and sixpence a pound. The second sort was the fat summer beaver, worth two shillings and ninepence. Next came in order the dry winter beaver, and the Bordeaux, each worth three shillings and sixpence; the dry summer beaver, not much valued, about one shilling and ninepence. Sixth came the coat beaver, as it was called, which brought four shillings and sixpence. The Muscovite, dry beaver of a fine skin, and covered with a silky hair, was worn in Russia, where the short fur was combed away and manufactured into fabric, leaving only the hair: this fetched

Varieties of beaver.

four and sixpence. And lastly on the list figured the mittain beaver, which was utilised in the manufacture of mittens, being worth one shilling and ninepence.

It was reported that in the year 1742 the natives were so discouraged in their trade with the Company that many found the peltry hardly worth the carriage, and the finest furs sold for very little. When the tribes came to the factory in June they found the goods much higher in price, and much in excess of the standard they were accustomed to. According to Joseph la France, a French-Canadian voyageur, they gave but a pound of gunpowder for four beavers, a fathom of tobacco for seven beavers, a pound of shot for one, an ell of coarse cloth for fifteen, a blanket for twelve, two fish-hooks or three flints for one, a gun for twenty-five, a pistol for ten; a common hat with white lace cost seven beavers, an axe four, a bill-hook one, a gallon of brandy four, a chequered shirt seven; "all of which sold at a monstrous profit, even to two thousand per cent."

It was a fact, nevertheless, that notwithstanding such discouragement the two expeditions of Indians who visited York and Churchill that year brought down two hundred packs of one hundred each, that is to say twenty thousand beaver skins. As to the other Indians who arrived from another direction, they carried three hundred packs of one hundred each, which made a total of fifty thousand beavers, besides nine thousand martens.

CHAPTER XXI

1731–1742

System of Licenses re-adopted by the French—Verandrye sets out for the Pacific—His Son slain—Disappointments—He reaches the Rockies—Death of Verandrye—Forts in Rupert's Land—Peter the Great and the Hudson's Bay Company—Expeditions of Bering—A North-West Passage—Opposition of the Company to its Discovery—Dobbs and Middleton—Ludicrous Distrust of the Explorer—An Anonymous Letter.

It has already been observed how fearful had grown the demoralisation of the Indians, chiefly through the instrumentality and example of the *coureurs des bois*. This class seemed daily to grow more corrupt, bidding fair to throw off the last vestige of restraint and become merged with the savage races in all their natural and acquired iniquity. We have seen, too, how the missionaries intervened, and implored the civil authorities to institute some sort of reform. It was at their solicitation that the Government of Canada at length decided to re-adopt the system of licenses, and to grant the privileges of exclusive trade to retired army officers, to each of whom they accorded a certain fur-bearing district by way of recompense

for services rendered by him. In order that the trader might be protected against hostile assault, permission was given to establish forts in certain places suitable for their construction.

One of the French Canadian youth, whom the exploits of Iberville against the Hudson's Bay Company had fired with a spirit of emulation, and who was head and shoulders above all that race of soldiers turned fur-traders, who now began to spread themselves throughout the great west—was Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, Sieur de la Verandrye.

This gallant soldier and intrepid explorer, to whose memory history has as yet done but scant justice, was born at Three Rivers on the 17th of November 1685. At an early age he embraced the profession of arms, and at twenty-four fought so valorously against Marlborough's forces at Malplaquet that, pierced by nine wounds, he was left for dead upon the field of battle. Upon his recovery he returned to the colony, and at twenty-seven married the daughter of the Seigneur d'Isle Dupas, by whom he had four sons. These sons were all destined to be associated with their father in the subsequent explorations in Rupert's Land and the Uplands.

Sieur de la Verandrye.

At the hour when Verandrye was seized with his zeal for exploration and discovery, the Company's rivals already possessed numerous posts established by Iberville, Duluth, Frontenac, and Denonville, and a host of lesser lights, in the west. Of one of these,

on the shores of Lake Nepigon at the extreme end of Lake Superior, Verandrye had been given the command.

While at this fort, a rumour had reached him of a mighty river flowing into the great ocean. Credulous of the truth of this rumour, borne to him by the Indians, Verandrye lost little time in communicating it to a friend, Father de Gonor, at Michilmackinac. It was shortly thereafter carried to Governor Beauharnois, who was induced, but not without much pleading, to grant Verandrye fifty men and a missionary for the purposes of exploration. But, although he had thus far succeeded, the only pecuniary aid upon which the explorer could rely was from the fur-trade. He was accordingly given a license to trade, and on the strength of this concession certain merchants advanced him an outfit. He set out, and arrived at Rainy Lake in September 1731, traversed it, and erected a fort near the site of the present Fort Francis of a later day, to which he gave the name of St. Peter.

Verandrye sets out to explore the West.

A year later he built another fort on the western shore of the Lake of the Woods, and in 1733 paddled down to the mouth of the Winnipeg River to the lake of that name. Crossing Lake Winnipeg, he ascended the Assiniboine River and constructed Fort Rouge.[1]

[1] This fort has been thought to have been in the neighbourhood of Selkirk, Manitoba. But Verandrye would not have abandoned such an advantageous position as that which the meeting of the two rivers afforded at the modern Winnipeg.

In 1738 the explorer's three sons, under their sire's instructions, made their way up the Assiniboine and built Fort la Reine, on the site of the present Portage la Prairie.

Well may it be said that the five years from 1733 to 1738 were years of cruel grief and disappointment for Verandrye. He had been struggling on to a realisation of his dream in spite of the bitterest discouragements. One of his sons had been slain by the Sioux; he was without funds, fur-trading being with him only a subsidiary employment. His men, lacking both courage and faith, became unmanageable, and Verandrye addressed the most affecting letters to his monarch in France, who looked coldly upon him and his schemes. Those merchants who had advanced Verandrye money loaded him with their distrust, perpetually harassed him for returns, and loudly demanded his recall, so that he was forced to stand still and engage in barter when his whole soul cried aloud for him to press on in his path and reach the Pacific of his dreams.

Verandrye divided his little party in the spring of 1742 and ascended the Souris River. Those who came to be familiar with the territory in a later day, when it was frequented by traders, might well appreciate what were the perils these pioneers encountered, and what dangers they escaped when they finally left the country of the peace-loving Ojibways at Red River, and struck off into the land of the Sioux, a tribe then, from

their ferocity to the whites, called the "tigers of the plains." But they were to go still farther. Already the eldest son of the explorer had reached the tribe of the Mandans on the Missouri, but by reason of his inability to obtain guides had been forced to return. He was again despatched by his father, this time in company with the younger son, known as the Chevalier, and two other Frenchmen into the unknown country to the west. This little band of four made a journey of several hundred miles, entering into a league with one of the nations into whose country they penetrated, to lead them to the great Western Ocean. On the first day of January 1743 they beheld, the first amongst white men, the eastern spurs of the northern Rocky Mountains. But here the Bow Indians, their guides, deserted them; surrounded by hostile tribes, the party sadly retraced its steps. It was in this same year that the elder Verandrye, scarred and gaunt from his long wanderings in the wilderness, presented himself at Quebec to confront his enemies and traducers. They had represented him as making a mighty fortune and leading an idle life, who could point proudly to having taken possession of the country of the Upper Missouri for Lewis XV.: who had built a score and more of forts in the unknown regions of the West.

Verandrye's son reaches the Rockies.

"If 40,000 livres of debt that I have over my head," said Verandrye bitterly, "are an advantage, then I can compliment myself on being very rich, and

I would have been much more so in the end, if I had continued."

His license was given to another who, however, made a poor showing by means of it, and it was not until Beauharnois's successor investigated Verandrye's claims that the explorer received some recognition at court. He was given a captaincy and the Cross of St. Lewis.

But the explorer had not waited for this. He had been pushing on in his work, and in 1748 ascended the Saskatchewan. The progress of the French was marked by more forts, one on Lake Dauphin and another called Bourbon at the extremity of his discoveries. Verandrye was about to cross the Rocky Mountains when death overtook him, on the 6th of December 1749.

The sons of Verandrye were eager to continue his work and attain at last the Pacific. But Bigot, the intendant, was not their friend; he had other plans, and the Verandryes were deposed by favourites with not half their ability or their claim to honours and rewards. But they had paved the way, and now the French were reaping the profits of the fur-trade in the North-West on a great scale.

Verandrye's work.

Thus were successively established, from 1731 to 1748, by Verandrye and his sons, Fort St. Pierre, on Rainy Lake; Fort St. Charles, on the Lake of the Woods; Fort Maurepas, near the mouth of the Winnipeg; Fort Dauphin, on the north-west extremity of Lake Manitoba; Fort la Reine, on the southern extremity of the last-named lake; Fort

Rouge, at the confluence of the Assiniboine and Red River; Fort Bourbon, at the head of Lake Winnipeg; Fort Poskoyac, on the Saskatchewan, and Fort Lacorne (Nipawi), at the forks of the last-named river.

In 1752, some years prior to the conquest of Canada, a relative of Verandrye, named Niverville, established Fort Jonquiere, at the foot of the mountains.[1] Which of all these forts were to pass, after many vicissitudes, into the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company, we shall see in the course of subsequent pages. Verandrye and his compeers chose their sites with great care and ability; so that rarely were their successors able to improve upon them. On the foundations or charred remnants of the French forts, when the structures themselves had perished, the English fur-traders, when they came, reared their own posts.

While thus the French were pressing forward from the south and east, at the same moment a new rivalry threatened to spring up in the far North-West.

Russia looks toward the New World.

The eighteenth century broke upon an abated zeal of the Spaniards in extending their discoveries and dominions in the New World. Almost contemporaneously the threads they threw down were grasped by another power, which the zeal and energy of one man had transformed from a collection of barbarous tribes into a great nation.

[1] On the site of Fort Jonquiere, a century later Captain Brisebois, of the Mounted Police, founded a post bearing his name. This post has given way to-day to the well-built and thriving town of Calgary.

Having achieved conquest over his neighbours and the cohesion of his new empire, Peter the Great turned his attention to a task well worthy of his attention. None knew as yet whether the two great continents, Asia and North America, united on the north-east. During Peter's residence in England, not the least of the institutions which interested him, was the Hudson's Bay Company. A letter from Peter is quoted by a Russian writer, in which he alludes to the English rivalry for these trades "which had so long been the monopoly of Muscovy, fur-hunting and fur-gathering." Doubtless even at this time he was speculating upon Russia's chances of competition with England for the fur-traffic of the New World. But before such a competition could be brought about, it was of the highest importance that the question of the geographical connection between Asia and North America should be settled. When Peter had been in Holland in 1717, he had been urged by some of the most eminent patrons of discovery amongst the Dutch to institute an expedition of investigation. But again other matters intervened; although in 1727 two Russian officers were actually equipped and in readiness to start overland when unexpectedly recalled for service in Sweden.

Not until he was upon his death-bed did Czar Peter pen with his own hand those instructions to Admiral Apraxin which later bore fruit. It was then, too, that the idea, according to Lestkof, was discussed of a

Russian fur company, similar in its methods and organisation to the Hudson's Bay Company.

Peter directed first that one or two boats with decks should be built at Kamschatka, or in the vicinity; that with these a survey should be made of the most northerly coasts of his Asiatic Empire, in order to determine whether they were or were not contiguous to North America. Also that the persons to whom the expedition might be entrusted should endeavour to ascertain whether there was any port in those regions belonging to Europe, and to keep a strict look-out for any European ship, taking care to employ some skilful men in making inquiries regarding the names and situation of the coasts which they discovered. They were instructed to keep an exact journal and to transmit it to St. Petersburg.

Peter died; but the Empress Catherine, his successor, was equally favourable to the scheme, and gave orders to fit out the expedition. To Captain Vitus Bering was entrusted the command. Under him were two lieutenants, Martin Spangberg and Alexi Tchirikoff; and besides other subalterns were several excellent ship-carpenters.

On February 5, 1735, they set out from St. Petersburg, and on March 16 arrived at Tobolsk, the capital of Siberia.

Bering returned from his first voyage satisfied that he had reached the utmost limits of Asia, and that no junction with North America existed. Some years

elapsed, and in 1741 Bering, Spangberg, and Tchirikoff again volunteered. This expedition was destined to prove fatal to the explorer; lost in a fog, while intense cold prevailed, and scurvy broke out amongst his men, on a little island[1] in Bering's Sea he breathed his last.

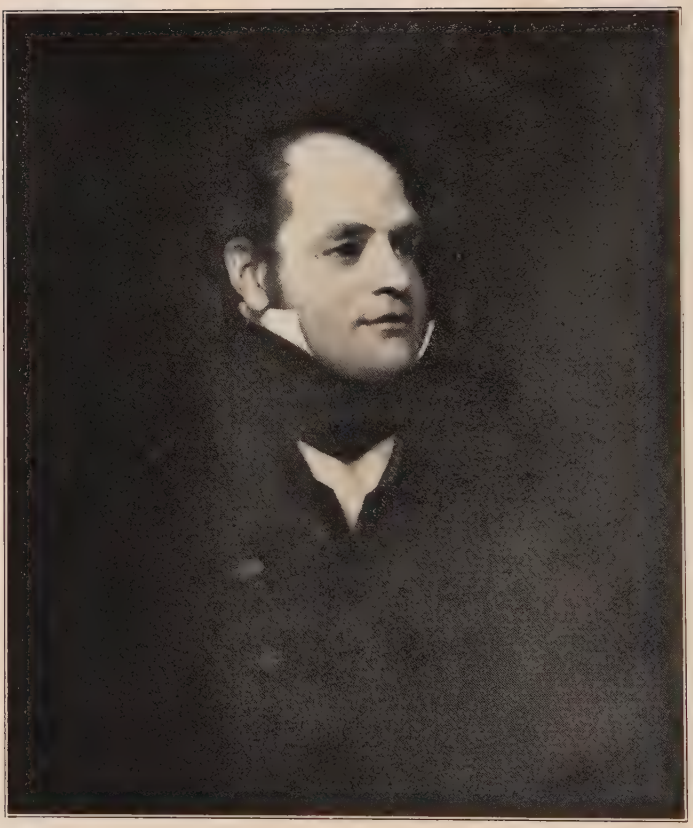
Bering's discoveries.

Although many years were to pass before the Russians took any more active steps, they had, by virtue of Bering's discoveries, secured a footing on the North American Continent, and were thus already neighbours, if not yet rivals, of the Hudson's Bay Company.

"It is very evident," wrote one of the contemporary chroniclers, "that for upwards of two centuries and a half an opinion has prevailed amongst the most knowing and experienced persons, that there is a passage to the North-West, and this built partly upon science, partly upon tradition. Now, it is very hard to conceive how such an opinion should maintain its credit if it was not founded in reality; for it is an old and true maxim that specious opinions endure but a short time, whereas truth is everlasting."

For many years the notion of a North-West passage had slept; but in 1737 it again attracted public attention. In that year Arthur Dobbs, a gentleman of some means and of scientific bent, made formal application to the Hudson's Bay Company for a search to be undertaken. Upon his representations the Com-

[1] Named after him Bering's Island.



SIR JOHN FRANKLIN, F.R.S.

From a picture in the National Portrait Gallery by THOMAS PHILLIPS, R.A.

pany sent forth two of their ships upon the quest. These, the *Churchill* and the *Musquash*, went, however, no farther north than latitude 62° 15′, and returned without seeing anything worthy of notice, save "a number of small islands, abundance of black whales, but no very great tides, the highest about two fathoms, the flood coming from the northward."

There had been for a great many years in the Company's employ an extremely able mariner, Captain Christopher Middleton. For some reason or other Middleton had become dissatisfied with its service, and one of his friends placed him in communication with the afore-mentioned patron of discovery, Dobbs. A close correspondence ensued.[1]

Dobbs was eager to employ Middleton in a search for the long-sought straits. This was by no means an easy matter. In the first place the Company flatly declined to participate in the scheme,[2] alleging that

[1] In one of his letters, dated 21st of January 1737, Middleton held that the Company thought it their interest rather to prevent than forward new discoveries in that part of the world. "For that reason they won't suffer any of our journals to be made public," he adds. Than which certainly no observation could be truer: or policy wiser.

[2] A List of Vessels Fitted Out by the Hudson's Bay Company on Discovery of a North-West Passage.

1719—*Albany Frigate*, Capt. George Barlow, sailed from England on or about 5th June. Never returned.
Discovery, Capt. David Vaughan, sailed from England on or about 5th June. Never returned.
Prosperous, Capt. Henry Kelsey, sailed from York Fort, June 19th. Returned 10th August following.

they had already done enough in that direction and that the whole idea was a fallacy.

There was no North-West passage to India, and the sooner the public mind divested itself of the folly of supposing one existed the better it would be for the public purse and the public wisdom.

The Company pointed out that if Middleton should winter at either of the factories in the Bay it might drive the natives to trade with the French, who were always on the alert; and trade so lost would never return or be regained. They begged the Admiralty to restrain Captain Middleton from interfering with the Company's trade and invading their property and rights.

Dobbs, in the meantime, had secured from the Admiralty for Middleton's use the bomb ketch *Furnace*, which, with another small vessel, the *Welcome*, was ready to sail early in June.

So opposed do the Company appear to having their

1719—*Success*, John Hancock, master, sailed from Prince of Wales' Fort, July 2nd. Returned 10th August.

1721—*Prosperous*, Capt. Henry Kelsey, sailed from York Fort, June 26th. Returned 2nd Sept.

Success, James Napper, master, sailed from York Fort, June 26th. Lost 30th of same month.

Whalebone, John Scroggs, master, sailed from Gravesend, 31st May; wintered at Prince of Wales' Fort.

1722—Sailed from thence 21st June. Returned July 25th following.

1737—*The Churchill*, James Napper, master, sailed from Prince of Wales' Fort, July 7th. Died 8th August; and the vessel returned the 18th.

The Musquash, Robert Crow, master, sailed from Prince of Wales' Fort, July 7th. Returned 22nd August.

domains meddled with by these fruitless expeditions, that they sent out a letter to their Governor at Churchill, which was the most convenient harbour for the explorers to winter in, not to receive Middleton into their fort. Dobbs and his friends getting wind of this, complained to the Admiralty, who wrote to the Honourable Adventurers in a tone of decided reproof. They observed that even if Middleton were to receive assistance and provisions, payment would be made for these to the Company on the return of the expedition to England.

The Company opposes further exploration.

After deliberating for some time, the Company wrote to the Lords of the Admiralty, saying that they had sent a further letter to Governor Norton requiring him to extend the necessary hospitality to Middleton. That the sort of hospitality the Company was prepared to dispense was not of too warm a character may be judged from the following—

"Hudson's Bay House, London,
May 15, 1741.

"*Mr. James Isham and Council,*
Prince of Wales' Fort, Churchill River.

"Gentlemen,—Notwithstanding our orders to you, if Captain Middleton (who is sent abroad in the Government's service to discover a passage north-west) should by inevitable necessity be brought into real distress and danger of his life and loss of his ship, in such case you are then to give him the best assistance and relief you can."

A duplicate of this letter was put into Middleton's possession, who, still dissatisfied, rushed off instantly with it to Whitehall. It was deemed necessary to apply to the Lords of the Regency that the Secretary of State might, by their orders, write to the Company to request the assistance they had refused to the Admiralty. The Company, thus hemmed in, issued a letter couched in more friendly terms.

"It is plain," remarks a contemporary writer, "that the Company believe there is a passage, which they want to conceal; for otherwise it would have been their interest to have the attempt made. If not found there would have been an end to prosecuting it any further, and they might probably have enjoyed their trade to the Bay, without its being coveted or inquired into."

Middleton owned to Dobbs that, just before his departure, the Company had endeavoured to bribe him with an offer of £5000 to return to their service, or (if he was determined to go) to pursue the voyage by Davis' Straits, or by any other way than to the west of the Bay. One of the Committee was said to have asserted that it would cost the Company that amount to support its right against the Crown and against private adventurers, and that "as he had been their friend, and knew all their concerns, it would be better to give him that sum than to give it to their lawyers." The Company did not deny that such an offer had been made privately by two or three of the Committee.

Middleton now proceeded on his journey in quest of the famed North-West passage. It is charged that on his arrival in the Bay he never once went ashore or sent his boat to search for any inlet or to try the tide. He investigated the current in latitude 63° 20′, and found it very rapid, in spite of the fact that there existed a great deal of ice to the northward, whose presence compelled him to stand off from shore until he passed Cape Dobbs, beyond which he found an opening north-westward. In this opening he sought shelter, remaining there for three weeks.

Middleton explores for a north-west passage.

No voyage of discovery since the world began was ever made under such circumstances. Numerous members of the crew, who had got wind of the situation, were filled, or professed to be filled, with distrust of their captain. Caring nothing about the voyage itself or the object for which it was undertaken, they entered with zeal a hundred times a day into plots to make the commander's life unbearable. The supposed passage was christened the "Forbidden Straits," and the crews vastly amused themselves with Middleton's supposed discomfiture. Several were very nearly yard-armed for spreading reports that the captain had purposely sailed past the straits. Sometimes the captain merely laughed at the views of his subordinates; at other times, it is said, he flew into a temper, and indulged in threats and abuse. Once, when from the number of whales and the breadth and depth of the

river, word sped from mouth to mouth that it was a strait they were in, and no river, "he rated several of them for pretending to say so against his opinion, saying his clerk was a double-tongued rascal, that he would cane the lieutenant, broomstick the master, and lash any others who would concern themselves about the voyage." It was, moreover, charged against Middleton that he interdicted the keeping of private journals, and that if any should disobey this order he threatened to break open their boxes and get possession of such records. Once when the lieutenants and masters were absent down the river to look for a cove suitable for harbouring the ships, Middleton grimly observed that he supposed they would bring back "some romantic account of a strait or passage." Nevertheless, for his part, he would not take the ships a foot farther. Petty intrigue characterised the whole of this voyage of discovery.

Trouble between Middleton and his men.

The officers of both the *Furnace* and the *Discovery* took turns in making jaunts into the country. On the 8th of August, Captain Middleton, the clerk, gunner, and carpenter went ashore at Cape Frigid, and after pacing some fifteen miles into the country, returned to find that the ship had drifted, although it then lacked some hours of high water. Officers and men on board from this circumstance had become convinced that it was directly due to the flood from the supposed strait. The captain laughed them to scorn, and said that if it came from any strait at all it was Hudson's Strait.

Two northern Indians were taken on board the *Discovery*, and Thompson, the surgeon, who understood some of the southern Indian tongue, began busying himself with making a vocabulary of their language. At this innocent occupation he was observed by Middleton, who threatened to "crop" him in case he persisted. When they reached Marble Island, although the two Indians were desirous of proceeding to England, he put the pair ashore in an ill boat which they were ignorant how to manage. The supplications of the unhappy savages were useless to turn the Company's captain from his purpose. In vain they told him that the island was three leagues from the mainland, and a hundred miles from their own country; that it was inhabited by the Esquimaux, their enemies.

"The captain gave them some provisions, ammunition, hatchets, and toys. The excuse he made for not bringing them to England was, that upon his return his friends might be out of the Admiralty, and as he had no orders to take them home, they would be left a charge upon him." This was plausible, but Middleton's detractors did not rest there. They accused the captain of saying that he was afraid that the Indians, when they had learned to speak English, would be talking of the copper mine and the North-West passage, and would thereby put the public to the expense of sending out more ships in quest of it. "And this, no doubt," commented Dobbs, "was the true reason for that piece of cruelty, for he thought if they

came to England he should *not be able to conceal the passage.*"

On Middleton's return, after his quest, he was accused of saying, "My character is so well established as a discoverer that no man will ever, hereafter, attempt to discover the North-West passage."

He certainly received a cordial invitation from the Government, the Admiralty, and the Court. Immediately upon his arrival in London he communicated with several of the partners of the Hudson's Bay Company. The preparation of his journal occupied for a time his leisure. "He himself," says Dobbs, "had got great reputation from the Royal Society for his observations upon cold; and for what he had discovered had got a medal from them. He was upon good terms with the Lords of the Admiralty, and was to dedicate his charts and discoveries to the King and noblemen of the first rank as well as to the Lords of the Admiralty." That the Lords of the Admiralty were perfectly satisfied with his conduct, there is every reason to believe, as in the following year Middleton was placed in command of the sloop *Shark*. All this naturally put him into a position to serve those under him. His recommendations for promotion only strengthened the suspicions gathering in the mind of Dobbs and his fellow-patrons. "He had recommended also his lieutenant, and thought none other on board had weight enough to impeach his proceedings, which, if

Middleton returns without discovering the passage.

they failed in, would ruin their characters; so that securing his officers, he thought all things would be safe amongst the crew." But Middleton was not one to forget the patron and prime mover of the expedition, whom he endeavoured to propitiate by sending him an abstract of his journal. This abstract seemed, to Dobbs, to be so full of contradictions and discrepancies, that he wrote to the explorer to send him, if possible, the journal itself. He had scarcely despatched this communication when he received a letter from Lanrick, "a gentleman who had been bred a scholar," who had accompanied Middleton on the voyage. It was substantially the same account rendered by the captain, with this added paragraph:

"Sir,—This account I should have sent you before now but that the captain, for reasons to himself best known, desired that none of us should say anything about it relating to the discovery for a little."

This extremely natural desire on the part of an explorer, about to become an author, seems to have been fraught with deep and incriminating significance to Dobbs. After a short time the whole of Middleton's journal reached him; it appeared to confirm all the scientist's singular presentiments.

Dobbs and the other patrons were therefore convinced that Middleton had played them false for the Hudson's Bay Company; and their belief in a North-West passage was strengthened rather than weakened.

In their report, after going over the whole account of the voyage furnished them, they were especially severe upon Middleton. "His whole conduct," they said, "from his going to Churchill until his return to England, and even since his return, will appear plainly that he intended to serve the Company at the public expense, and contrived everything so as to stifle the discovery, and to prevent others from undertaking it for the future so as to secure the favour of the Company and the reward they said they promised him before he began the voyage."

Suspicion attaches to Middleton.

An informer appeared, who testified that Middleton had declared in presence of the others at a council held at York Factory, Churchill, that he "should be able to make the voyage, but none on board should be any the wiser and he would be a better friend to the Company than ever."

Middleton was charged in public with neglect in having failed to explore the line of coast which afforded a probability of a passage to the North-West. The principal points at issue appear to have been in respect to the discovery by Middleton of the Wager River, Repulse Bay, and the Frozen Strait. But a century later Sir Edward Parry has said: "The accuracy of Captain Middleton is manifest upon the point most strenuously argued against him, for our subsequent experience has not left the smallest doubt of Repulse Bay and the northern part of the Welcome being filled

by a rapid tide flowing into it from the eastward through the Frozen Strait." Dobbs, fully possessed by a conviction that the captain's story of the Frozen Strait was fictitious, as well as everything Middleton had said concerning that part of the voyage, confidently insisted on the probability of the tide finding its way through Wager River, or at least through some arm of the sea communicating with that inlet from the westward.[1]

One detail only was lacking to render the situation farcical—an anonymous letter. This reached Dobbs on the 21st of January, and ran in this absurd strain:—

This Script is only open to your Eyes, which have been sealed or closed with too much (we cannot say Cunning) Artifice, so as they have not been able to discover our Discoverer's Pranks. All Nature cries aloud that there is a Passage, and we are sure there is one from Hudson's Bay to Japan. Send a Letter directed to Messieurs Brook and Cobham, who are Gentlemen who have been the Voyage, and cannot bear so Glorious an Attempt, should die under the Hands of Mercenary Wretches, and they will give you such Pungent Reasons as will awaken all your Industry. They desire it may be kept secret so long as they shall think fit; they are willing to venture their Lives, their Fortunes, their All, in another attempt; and they are no inconsiderable persons, but such as have had it much at heart ever since they saw the Rapidity of Tides in the

[1] "On looking through the correspondence at the Admiralty, it is impossible not to be struck with the straightforward manliness, candour, and honesty of purpose exemplified by Captain Middleton throughout this trying business. It was a cruel attack."—Sir John Barrow.

Welcome. The Frozen Straits is all Chimera, and everything you have yet read or seen concerning that part of our Voyage. We shall send you some unanswerable Queries. Direct for us at the Chapter Coffee House, St. Paul's Churchyard, London."

It was now clear that Middleton's voyage had been made in vain, and that another in search of the passage would at no very distant day be attempted.

CHAPTER XXII

1744–1748

War again with France—Company takes Measures to Defend its Forts and Property—"Keep your guns loaded"—Prince "Charlie"—His Stock in the Company confiscated—Further Instructions to the Chief Factors—Another Expedition to Search for a North-West Passage—Parliament offers Twenty Thousand Pounds Reward—Cavalier Treatment from Governor Norton—Expedition Returns—Dobbs' Enmity—Privy Council refuse to grant his Petition—Press-gang Outrages—Voyage of the "Seahorse."

In the year 1740 the state of affairs in Europe betokened hostilities between England and France. England had declared war against Spain, and although for a time Lewis XV. and his ministers sympathised with the latter country, they endeavoured to avoid being drawn into a conflict with her powerful neighbour and hereditary enemy across the Channel. Yet such a conflict seemed inevitable, when by degrees Spanish commerce became shattered under the blows of King George's navy. Apprehensive that England would wrest from Spain her colonies, France resolved to take sides with Spain. In 1744 war was

War with France.

declared, and hostilities, which had been in abeyance for thirty-one years, at once recommenced in the transatlantic possessions of both crowns.

It was therefore decided at a general court of the Adventurers, at which no fewer than seventy were present, to take measures to avoid a repetition of the disasters of fifty years previously. They felt that their enemies were now many, that they would be glad to see them driven from the Bay, and that less assistance might be expected from the Government than at any of the crises which had previously overtaken them. We have seen to what this official unfriendliness was due. It now behoved the Company to gird up its loins, and if the foe came, to strike, and to strike with force.

It was the Hudson's Bay Company against France and Spain, and the episode of Louisburg alone saved the Company from destruction.

To illustrate the temper of the Company at this crisis, instructions were drawn up by the Committee, and despatched to the chief Factors in the Bay. The one addressed to Joseph Isbister and Council at Albany Fort was dated the 10th of May 1744.

"The English and French having declared war," it ran, "against each other, and the war with Spain still continuing, we do hereby strictly direct you to be always on your guard, and to keep a good watch, and that you keep all your men as near home as possible.

"We do also direct that you fix your cannon in the

most proper places to defend yourselves and annoy an enemy, after which you are to fire each cannon once with powder to see how they prove, and instruct your men to the use of them without firing; and that you keep them constantly loaded with powder and ball, ready for service. You are also to keep your small arms loaded and in good order and at hand, to be easily come at; and that those loaded arms be drawn or discharged once a month, and be well cleaned; and you are to exercise your men once a week till they are well disciplined and afterwards once a month. And you are also to keep a sufficient number of your trading guns loaded and at hand in case of an attack; and if there be any Indians that you can confide in, and will be of service in your defence, we recommend it to you to employ them in such manner as you think proper.

Bellicose instructions from the Company.

"We have wrote to the factory at Moose River, that in case they have any intelligence of the French coming down that river to attack them, they are immediately to send you notice thereof, that you may make the necessary preparations for your defence, and that there be a constant correspondence and intelligence between each factory for the safety of both.

"As we rely on the courage and conduct of Mr. Isbister, our chief, in case of an attack from the enemy, which, if done at all on your factory, we apprehend it will be by land in the winter, from Canada; in which case the enemy not being able to bring down any

cannon with them, we doubt not of your frustrating their designs and repulsing them.

"In case you are attacked at Henly House, and notwithstanding a vigorous resistance you should have the misfortune to be overpowered, then you are to nail up the cannon, blow up the House, and destroy everything that can be of service to the enemy, and make the best retreat you can to the factory." The letters to the other Governors were in similar strain.

The Company directed Isbister to get the best information he could from the trading Indians, "whether the French are making any preparations to come down to the factory, or have lodged any provisions, stores, or ammunition at certain distances from their supply. We also direct you, for your better security, at all times to keep two Indians in the factory with civil and kind usage, and send them out every morning for intelligence, to a proper distance, so that they may return in the evening; and provided that they do not return that it be an alarm to you, and that you thereupon prepare yourselves for a vigorous defence. But," it was added, "you must not, upon any consideration, let those Indians have the least knowledge of the use you intend to make of their not returning."

At the Company's urgent request letters of marque were granted to the *Prince Rupert* against both France and Spain. The *Prince Rupert* was one hundred and eighty tons burthen, and the crews were full of expectation that the voyage would yield them a prize of some

sort or another. But they were destined not merely to be disappointed, but to be given a great fright into the bargain. When in the neighbourhood of Davis' Straits, where a whale fishery was established, several large vessels were sighted. They seemed to the Company's captain undoubtedly French men-of-war. Filled with fear, he immediately turned round in his tracks and bore away as fast as his sails could carry him, and after beating about for a time managed to pass through the straits unobserved. So convinced were the Company on the return of its ship in the autumn that the French were lying in wait for its ships at the straits, they besought the Admiralty with a request for a convoy to York Fort, to return with its vessels the following autumn.

Letters of Marque to the Company's ships.

A convoy was granted, but it was hardly necessary. Louisburg had fallen, and all the strength the French could muster was being directed in an attempt to win back that fortress from the English. No French ships could therefore be spared to cruise north of latitude fifty in North America.

One consequence of the war with France was a revival of the hopes of the Jacobites. In 1744 Charles Edward, the grandson of James II., was placed by Lewis in command of "a formidable armament," and in the following year the young Pretender placed his foot on a little island of the Hebrides, where for three weeks he stood almost alone. But the Highland blood was fired; the clans rallied to the standard of "Prince

Charlie," and when he began his march on Edinburgh, several thousand Scottish zealots had rallied to his standard. "James the Eighth" was proclaimed at the Town Cross of the capital, and when his troops and the English regiments met at Prestonpans, in September, the latter were defeated with heavy loss. But although this victory swelled his numbers it did not bring the Lowlanders and English to fight for him. "Hardly a man," we are told, "had risen in his support as he passed through the districts where Jacobitism boasted of its strength. The people flocked to see his march as if it had been a show. Catholics and Tories abounded in Lancashire, but only a single squire took up arms." The knell of Jacobitism was rung, and after a brief success the English forces fell upon Prince Charles Edward at Culloden Moor, and cut his little army to pieces. Fifty of his followers and adherents in England ascended the scaffold; Lords Lovat, Balmerino, and Kilmarnock were beheaded, and over forty noblemen and gentlemen were attainted by Act of Parliament. Scarcely a month had elapsed from Charles Edward's escape to France after his romantic adventures, when a motion was submitted to the Governor and Company of Adventurers in England trading into Hudson's Bay, ordering the confiscation of the stock held by the heir of the second Governor of the Company, King James II. The exiled monarch had never relinquished his share, and under the name of "John

Confiscation of Prince Charlie's stock.

Stanion" the dividends had always reached him. But the Jacobite rising affected his fellow-adventurers' complaisance, and by 1746 "John Stanion" had ceased to figure as an active partner of the Company.[1]

Under date of 3rd of May 1745, the Company wrote to Governor Isbister and Council, at Albany Fort, to say that they had "augmented the complement of men (as you desired) at your Factory and Moose Fort, that in case of need you may assist each other, and thereby we hope you will be enabled to baffle the designs of the enemy.

"We do direct," it pursued, "that not only a continual correspondence be kept between you and Moose Fort, but that you correspond with the Factory at Slude River, York Fort, and Prince of Wales' Fort as often as you can, and if under any apprehensions of an attack, to give immediate notice to Moose Fort. We still recommend your diligence in getting intelligence and information of the designs of the French."

Further instructions to Company's officials.

It also urged Governor Pilgrim and Council, at Prince of Wales's Fort, to keep a good watch, and his men near home, "except those that are guarding the battery at Cape Merry, but not to hinder a proper number to be employed in providing a sufficient quantity of the country provisions to prevent the complaint of those

[1] While the name of John Stanion certainly appears in the list of proprietors of Hudson's Bay stock, published in 1749, it is followed by the significant term *deceased*.

persons that murmur for want of victuals; and we recommend sobriety, that you may be capable of making a vigorous defence if attacked.

"We again recommend your keeping the land, round the Fort and the Battery at Cape Merry, free from everything that may possibly conceal or shelter an enemy, that you may thereby prevent being surprised.

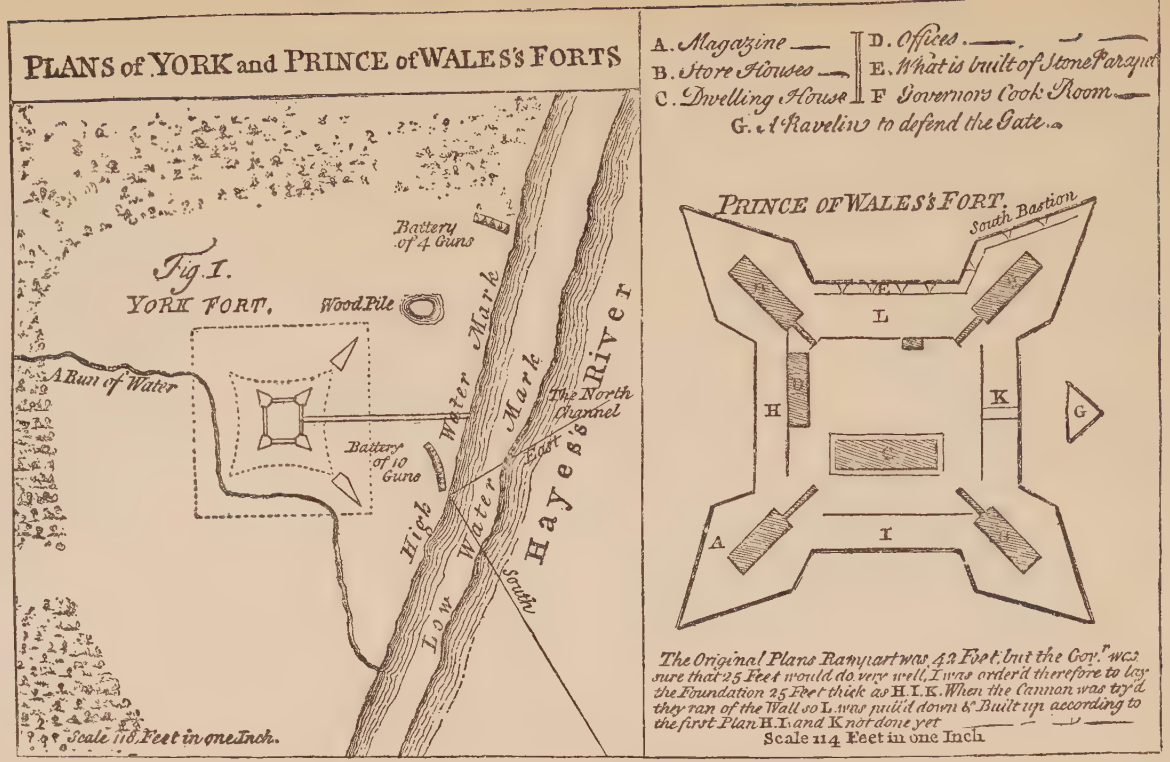
"We again direct that you keep up a general correspondence with all the Factories, and get what intelligence you can of the designs of the French."

The course of events now bids us return to Dobbs and the renewed endeavours to find a North-West passage through the Company's territory.

A number of public-spirited persons came forward for the prosecution of the design. Parliament was urged to act in the matter, and a bill was carried, offering a reward of twenty thousand pounds for the discovery of the North-West passage.

"Whereas," ran the Act, "the discovering of a North-West passage through Hudson's Straits, to the Western American Ocean, will be of great Benefit and advantage to the trade of this Kingdom; and whereas it will be a great encouragement to Adventurers to attempt the same, if a public reward was given to such person or persons as shall make a perfect discovery of the said passage: May it therefore please your Majesty that it may be enacted; and be it enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty by and with the advice and consent of the

Parliament and the North-West passage.


PLANS of YORK and PRINCE of WALES's FORTS
A. Magazine
B. Store Houses
C. Dwelling House
D. Offices
E. What is built of Stone Parapet
F Governors Cook Room
G. A Ravelin to defend the Gate
Fig. I.
YORK FORT,
Battery of 4 Guns
Wood Pile
A Run of Water
Battery of 10 Guns
High Water Mark
Low Water Mark
East
South
Hayes's River
The North Channel
Scale 118 Feet in one Inch.
PRINCE OF WALES's FORT.
South Bastion
L
H
K
G
A
I
The Original Plans Ramyart was 42 Feet but the Gov.r was sure that 25 Feet would do very well, I was order'd therefore to lay the Foundation 25 Feet thick as H. I. K. When the Cannon was try'd they ran of the Wall so L was pull'd down & Built up according to the first Plan H. I. and K not done yet
Scale 114 Feet in one Inch

PLANS OF YORK AND PRINCE OF WALES' FORTS

Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that if any ship or vessel, ships or vessels belonging to any of his Majesty's subjects, shall find out and sail through any passage by sea between Hudson's Bay and the Western and Southern Ocean of America, the owner or owners of such ship or ships, vessel or vessels as aforesaid, so first finding out and sailing through the said passage, his or their executors, administrators, or assigns shall be entitled to receive and shall receive as a reward for such discovery, the sum of twenty thousand pounds."

Parliament took care, however, to declare that nothing in the Act should "any ways extend or be construed to take away or prejudice any of the estates, rights, or privileges of or belonging to the Governor and Company of Adventurers trading into Hudson's Bay."

With such encouragement, it was not long before a North-West Association was formed for the raising of £10,000, which sum it was thought would answer the necessary expense of the proposed expedition. The ships bought by the Committee were one of one hundred and eighty tons, called the *Dobbs' Galley*, and another of one hundred and forty tons, to which the name of the *California* was given. Each of these vessels was got ready, and a sufficient quantity of stores and provisions put on board. A cargo of merchandise, suitable for presents to the natives, was put on board, after assurance to the Hudson's Bay

Company that these would not be used for purpose of barter. The command of the *Dobbs' Galley* was entrusted to Captain William Moor, an old servant of the Company; that of the *California* being given to Francis Smith. By way of encouragement, premiums were settled on officers and crew, in case of success. Thus the captain was to have £500, each of the mates £200, and every other officer and seaman, a reward suitable to his station. Over and above all this, in case they were so fortunate as to take any prizes, such were to belong entirely to them.

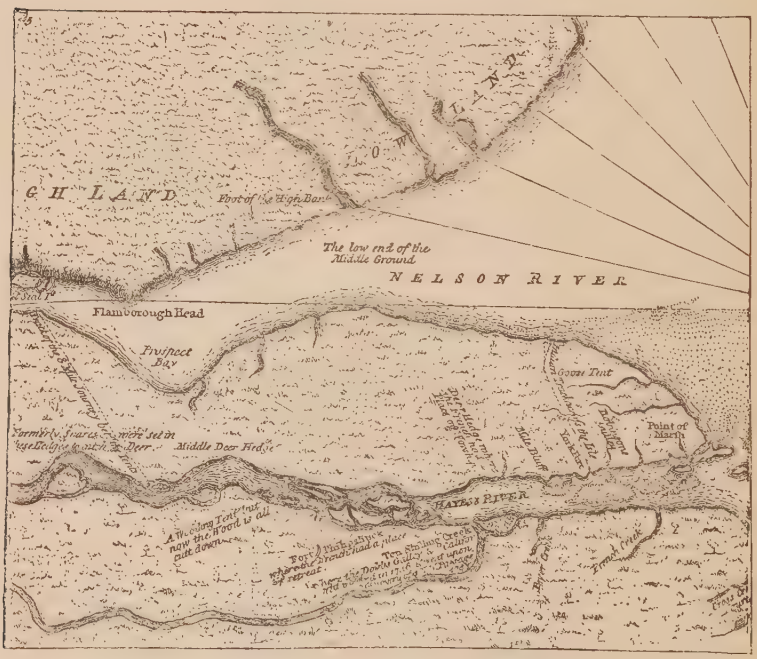
Expedition of the North-West Association.

On the 10th of May the expedition started. In order that they might get safely beyond the British Isles without danger from the French privateersmen, the Admiralty appointed a convoy to meet them at the Island of Pomona, in the Orkneys. Judge of their surprise to find this convoy commanded by Captain Middleton himself, on board H.M.S. *Shark*. Some days later the explorer of 1742 and the explorers of 1746 bade farewell to one another.

For some months the ships cruised about the Bay. At last, in September, it was decided to set about preparations for wintering in some part of Hays' River. This they found in a creek about five miles above York Factory, on the south side of the stream. The locality was, perhaps, hardly congenial in a social sense.

"The Governor," says one who accompanied the ex-

pedition as the agent of the patrons,[1] "being now convinced of our intentions to winter there, used his utmost endeavours that we might lay our ships below



CONTEMPORARY MAP SHOWING THE HAYS' RIVER

the fort, in a place open to the sea, where they would have been in all probability beat to pieces, either from the waves of the sea setting in or the breaking of the

[1] Henry Ellis.

ice; but as his arguments were of no efficacy in persuading us, and finding himself disappointed in this, as in his former scheme, being still resolved to distress us as much as possible, he sent most of the Indians, whose chief employment is to kill deer, geese, &c., into the country, on purpose that we might not make use of them in that way, or be in any wise benefited by their means."

Governor Norton.

The charge that Governor Norton desired the destruction of the ships is too absurd to refute at this late day; nevertheless there is little doubt that the explorers believed it, and anything else their inflamed imaginations and prejudice against the Company suggested. Even when Norton designed to show them kindness, the design was twisted into sinister shape, as for instance, when at Christmas time, hearing that their supply of liquor was short, he sent as a present to the explorers, at the little log-house they had christened Montague House, a couple of casks of brandy with which to make good cheer. Soon afterwards scurvy broke out, and immediately the disease was set down to the brandy. "Our people had been healthy enough before," says Ellis.

But even when the scurvy had carried off several of the men at Montague House, Governor Norton was alleged to have refused either to succour or to suggest a remedy. "The Indians were charged not to come near us, or to furnish us with anything (and this out of consideration for them), because we had a contagious

distemper amongst us." Norton's sole view in all his actions is represented to have been to hinder and distress the explorers, "which," remarks the writer quoted, philosophically, "is the encouragement that all are to expect who go in search of a North-West passage *from such neighbours.*"

When spring came the expedition resumed its labours. It is said the crews were full of alacrity and cheerfulness. One honest seaman, "whose sole delight was a delicious dram," was so enthusiastic over the discovery that "in the warm sincerity of his heart he could not help saying, with a good round oath, 'Now, I had rather find the North-West passage than half an anchor of brandy!'"

The summer was spent in coasting the whole north-west side of the Bay. But, alas, the North-West passage so ardently and characteristically desired by the honest seaman, was not found, and by the 14th of October the expedition was back again in England, after an absence of one year, four months, and seventeen days. The explorers and the patrons might well have been discouraged from further attempts, albeit they returned, we are told, "with clearer and fuller proofs, founded on plain facts and accurate experiments, that such a passage existed." Nevertheless, if the Company breathed easier on their return, it was a temporary relief. A new trial was in store for the Honourable Adventurers, as will be seen in the next chapter.

Return of the expedition to England.

In 1748, war still continuing with France and Spain, the Company again issued strict orders to Governor Spence at Albany Fort to be always on his guard, and to keep a good watch and his men near home, "but not to hinder a proper number to be employed in providing a sufficient quantity of the country provisions, particularly geese, which we find you constantly employ the Indians only to kill for you, and which we are dissatisfied with; that being such a material article, you ought always to blend some of your people with the natives in the goose seasons, that they may understand how to kill them, and thereby lessen your dependence on the native hunters."

To the Governor of Prince of Wales' Fort it directed that he should "constantly keep his great guns loaded with powder and ball ready for service during the time the rivers are open. You are also to keep your small arms loaded and in good order, and at hand, to be easily come at, which loaded arms and cannon are to be drawn once a month and well cleaned, and to exercise your men as often as requisite, whom we expect by this time are artists, not only in the use of small arms but also of cannon, that the great expense we have been at in this particular may answer the end proposed thereby in case of an attack. You are also to keep a sufficient number of your trading guns loaded and at hand, which charges are also to be drawn every month, and if there be any Indians you can confide in and will be of service to you in your defence, we re-

commend it to you to employ them in such manner as you think proper."

Certainly if a French commander of even Iberville's power had appeared before the forts of the Company in 1748 he would have met with a far different reception to that which was offered to that champion in 1697.

The Company suffered much from the press-gangs, from time to time, and in eras of war the evil was almost intolerable. It was well known that the sailors in its employ were amongst the ablest and hardiest on the high seas, which fact exposed them perpetually to the onslaughts of the crimps and bullies.

In 1739 the Company's vessel, the *Seahorse*, was intercepted by the man-of-war *Warwick*, and seventeen men of the *Seahorse* crew captured by the press-gang for services in the navy.

That the *Seahorse* might not be totally without servants, a number of incompetent landsmen were put aboard in their stead. Nevertheless, the voyage was continued to the Bay, although not without great peril, not arriving until 27th of September. The voyage of the disabled *Seahorse* was long a tradition in the Company's service.

By an Order-in-Council dated the 4th of February 1748, a petition from Arthur Dobbs and members of a committee appointed by the subscribers for finding out a passage to the Western and Southern Ocean of America, "was referred to the consideration of a com-

mittee of Parliament." After hearing counsel for and against the Company, this committee of two members decided that "considering how long the Company have enjoyed and acted under this charter without interruption or encroachment, we cannot think it advisable for his Majesty to make any express or implied declaration against the validity of it till there has been some judgment of a court of justice to warrant it." Enraged at this decision, Dobbs and his friends lost no time in taking other steps towards the accomplishment of their purpose hostile to the interests of the Honourable Merchants-Adventurers in England trading into Hudson's Bay.

Dobbs' petition rejected by a Parliamentary committee.

END OF VOL. I.

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
Edinburgh & London